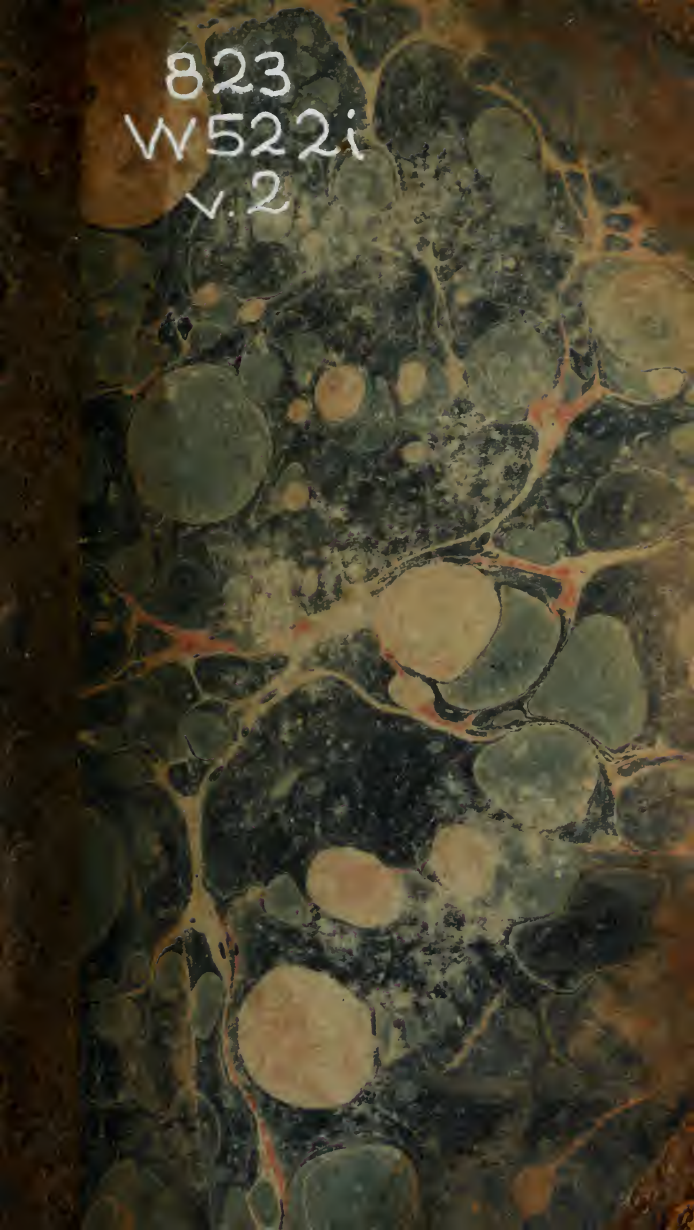
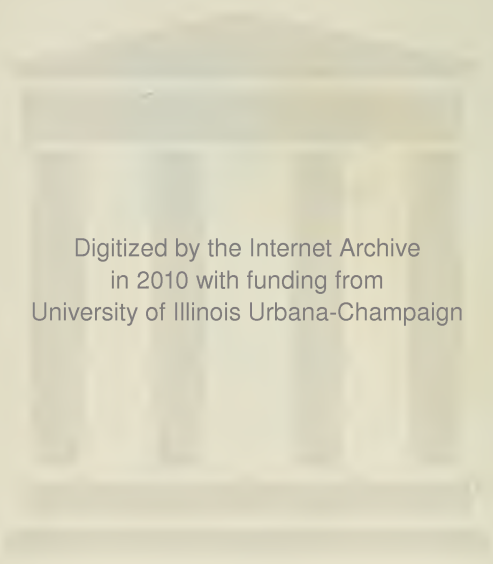


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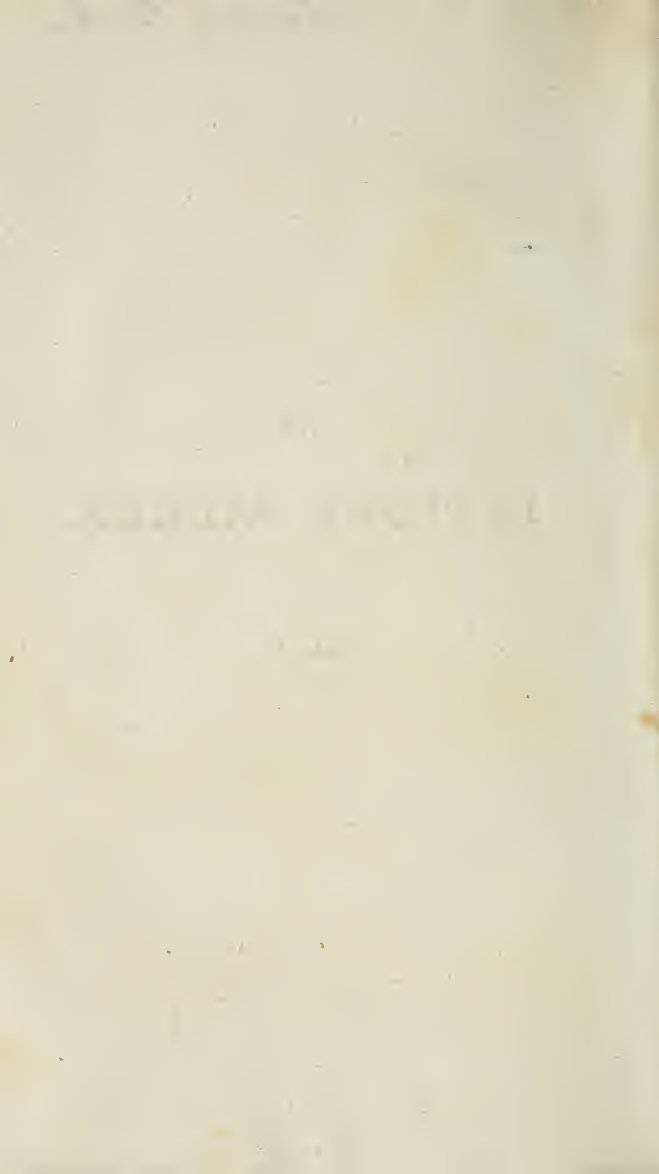




Isabella Baker

THE
INFIDEL FATHER.

VOL. II.



THE
INFIDEL FATHER;

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"A TALE OF THE TIMES," "A GOSSIP'S STORY," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES,

VOL. II.

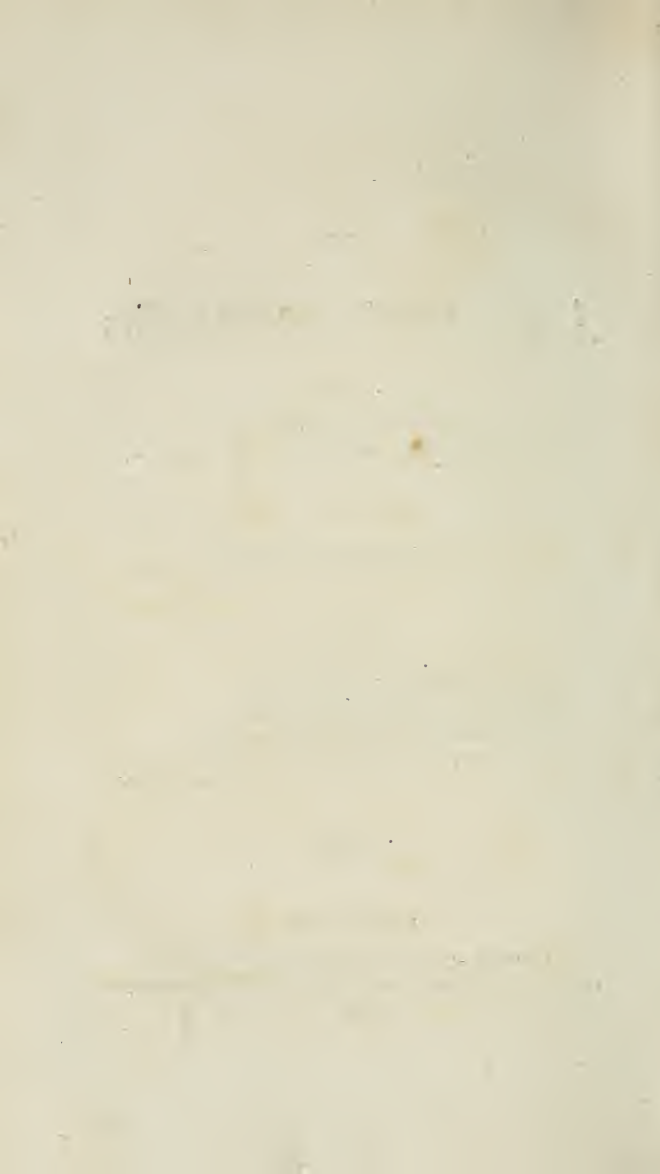
—Though old, he still retain'd
His manly sense, and energy of mind.
Virtuous and wise he was, but not severe;
He still remember'd that he once was young;
His easy presence check'd no decent joy.

ARMSTRONG.

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THE
INFIDEL FATHER.

CHAP. XI.

Rather short ; yet long enough to restore an injured Lady to her Rights, and to present an Epitome of the Virtues of Philosophy.

VIRTUE and religion are not only lovely and amiable when seen in their genuine forms, but they possess also the incomparable advantage of enduring the minutest inspection, and improving on the closest familiarity. This, I grant, is no new discovery in morals ; it is a truth as

old as the creation: but it cannot be too often repeated.

Lady Caroline did not find her predilection for Mr. Brudenell and Sophia diminished at the morning interview. The latter, indeed, appeared with fresh attractions, as the dejection and reserve, which were evident in her manner the preceding evening, gradually gave way to the vivacity and frankness so congenial with youth and innocence. Lady Caroline perceived that her future protegee possessed information, sense, and politeness. She had wit too, though rather of the playful than of the brilliant kind, more desirous to please than to shine, and too much under the command of mild benignity to purchase applause by the temporary confusion of another. In short, her ladyship began to be a little doubtful of her own advantage in having a *superior* education.

“ Am I prudent,” said she to herself, “ in so readily consenting to have this girl for my constant associate? She is too engaging to act as my foil, and seems too sincere to administer a little *adroit* flattery, just when I am surfeited with the gross adulation of fools. What a novelty will it be, if my humble cousin should become my mentor! and yet already I feel afraid of saying any thing to incur her censure.”

Time never flies away so pleasantly as when spent in an agreeable conversation, in which each individual bears its due share, and the leading personage acts only as moderator to the assembly. Lady Caroline perceived her own vivacity so well balanced by Mr. Brudenell's good sense and Sophia's sprightly sweetness, that she began to hope they might get through the morning without having recourse to any of those adventitious

helps, by which that envied race of beings, whom the lower orders consider as highly fortunate in having no employment, ward off that formidable monster ennui. Her Ladyship so much enjoyed her company, that she obeyed Lord Glanville's summons with reluctance, and entered his apartment determined to observe the contrast between his cold mysterious behaviour and Mr. Brudenell's frank benevolence.

Lord Glanville's mind still appeared in a state of restless perturbation, which he visibly strove to disguise under an air of affected ease, something resembling the forced mirth of a hardened criminal who determines to die with spirit. He chose to converse with his daughter on indifferent topics, although his malapropos answers indicated that one important subject engrossed his thoughts. He wished to talk of his guests, but hoped that something would lead the
con-

conversation that way. Lady Caroline saw his design and determined to disappoint it; for though her ladyship was a most passionate admirer of moral fitness, like other great philosophers she had neglected to reduce her theory to practice; or rather, she was so busy in composing a lofty system of virtue, fitted for sublime occasions, that she overlooked the *every-day* duties, and perhaps, like a very eminent moralist of the new school, lowered them to the rank “ of square-elbowed family drudges.” Certain it is, that she was too much amused by disappointing her father’s menœuvres to make her tell him what he wanted to know but did not choose to ask, to reflect that true benevolence, as well as filial piety, loves “ to explore the wish,” and to “ explain the asking eye.”

After amusing the Earl with comments on the daily papers, observations on the

weather, and a narrative of the neighbours to whom they owed calls or cards of inquiry, Lady Caroline, satisfied with her dutiful attentions, rose to take leave. Lord Glanville apologized for his forgetfulness, and expressed a hope that Mr. Brudenell and Miss Herbert were not fatigued by their long journey. Lady Caroline, quite indignant at her own giddiness, now recollected Mr. Brudenell's message. The quick changes in Lord Glanville's face proved it to be of some importance. "But pray, Lady Caroline," said the Earl,—“I hope this same Miss Herbert is not an uncouth girl?”

“Not in the least,” replied the young Lady.

“It would be mortifying,” resumed the polite father, “to have you at your first debut associated with a gaunt staring piece of rusticity, whom, as you *cannot* shake off, you will be *forced* to patronize.”

“Cannot

“Cannot shake off! forced to patronize!” repeated Lady Caroline to herself with astonishment; “where can this enigma end? I was told of a companion, an humble friend, whom I might choose or reject; and now it proves to be a positive appendage from whom I cannot be liberated.”

Convinced that the best method of gaining complete information was to seem perfectly satisfied with ignorance, Lady Caroline tripped to the window, humming an Italian song, which she interrupted to make the *novel* remark that swans look very beautiful on the water, especially when the sun shines. She then with as careless an air asked if Miss Herbert would go much into public.

“Why yes,” replied his Lordship, “I think she must go into public; her birth and situation will require——But pray, Caroline—I know Brudenell is not

the mere theologian. He possesses general knowledge, has seen a little of life, is not contracted in his notions—not very contracted I mean. I want to know something of his manners. Are they repulsive, stern, unforgiving?”

“I can only say that he reproved *me* without *my* feeling offended at his freedom. How apt he is to forgive *I* have no cause to inquire.”

“Nor have I,” returned the Earl with great quickness; “I thought, perhaps, he might be somewhat of a formal Bizarre, and feel piqued by my not seeing him immediately. And yet in a matter of importance—there are so many preliminaries to adjust. I think Caroline you are near four-and-twenty?”

“Next January, my Lord.”

“You want but four months of the time when, according to the terms of your grandfather’s will, you will be mistress of your maternal fortune. It
was

was a shameful will, wrong in many respects. I was deprived of all power, and can only hope that your guardians have been faithful stewards. Lord Lewson did not make me one of them, though my generous behaviour to his daughter was well known, notwithstanding, I will own, some severe provocations. But peace to the ashes of the unconscious dead ! I only meant to observe, that your fortune cannot be less than forty thousand pounds."

" Exclusive of the Glanville estate," observed Lady Caroline.

" *That*," replied the Earl, " is at my own disposal ; and I would not wish you to raise your expectations too high. Beside that our family is remarkable for longevity——"

" Ah," thought Lady Caroline, " now the mystery is unravelled. A step-mother hangs over my head *in terrorem*. Who can she be? Melisandriana? or

can cupid have goaded the amorous graybeard to the very pinnacle of absurdity, and prompted him, grand signior like, to have *distant* beauties brought to him for his approbation? Ah, if vanity has induced Brudenell to sacrifice his grand-daughter, Sophia's ingenuous face tells me that she will scorn the mercenary bait that dotage offers."

These reflections were interrupted by Lord Glanville, who had now so far conquered his emotions as to say, "You had a brother."

"A brother!" cried Lady Caroline with indignation and amazement. "Why have I been kept a stranger from my mother's son?"

"No," replied his Lordship; "he was my issue by a former marriage." The groan which burst from his bosom as he uttered these words proved that Sophia Aubrey's wrongs had been well avenged

avenged by the visitations of the bosom-monitor.

Lady Caroline paced the room in great agitation. To forego the proud consciousness of being the heiress of Glanville's lofty towers was mortifying, even to a person who had not been sufficiently versed in ordinary affairs to know how necessary wealth is to purchase those luxuries which use has rendered necessary. But her mind soon recovered its wonted tone, on recollecting that this disappointment would enable her to call forth her energies, and to imitate the magnanimity of those illustrious women whose lofty contempt of pecuniary motives had been immortalized by the never-wearied pens of French wits and German fabulists.

"Has Caroline Glanville," thought she, "lost any part of her real self? Is she degraded by owing less to adventitious aids? Will she be deprived of real

respect because the eyes of her admirers are exclusively directed to the accomplishments and mental endowments which she possesses? Will her wit be less poignant, her personal charms less attractive, because she is no longer the richest heiress in England? No, I disdain all extrinsic homage. The greatness of my soul shall appear indisputable; and I will thank Fortune for giving me this opportunity to found my glory on the broad basis of innate worth. This unknown brother shall be my idol. Whatever be his character, I will seem to adore him; and the praise that I bestow will be reflected back on my own liberality. Yes! I confess, in circumstances like these, even the cold domestic family virtues acquire an air of heroical greatness. I will bid his Lordship produce his heir. I will tell him that I am impatient to resign my surreptitious claims. I will boast that I feel the divine principle

ple of immutable justice glowing in my breast, and I will then bid him glory in his daughter."

Besides that fundamental principle which proves the superiority of christianity over its rival psuedo-philosophy, I mean the conviction that the merit of our actions will be finally determined by the secret motives which induced us to perform them, religion possesses many real advantages. Among the rest it may be affirmed, that its faithful votaries are always equal to the exigencies of the moment, and prepared to act as duty requires. Lady Caroline was too much engaged in thinking of the applause that she meant to acquire by her exemplary future conduct to her brother, to recollect the present exigencies of her father, who, overcome by the feelings of self-reproach and shame, added to the humiliation of being compelled to acknowledge

ledge his long-concealed offences, had fainted.

As soon as Lady Caroline perceived his situation, she ran to the door and screamed for help. Her cries brought up Jervais, and he was soon followed by Mr. Brudenell.

“Pardon me, Madam,” said he, stopping Lady Caroline as she was going to quit the chamber. “Let us dismiss the servant. We shall be the Earl’s best restoratives.”

“I really can do no good,” replied Lady Caroline. “Jervais knows his Lord’s ways best, and suspended animation always affects my feelings. Indeed, Mr. Brudenell, you must allow me to attend to my sensations. When his Lordship recovers, he shall find that I have a soul superior to the poor considerations of fortune.”

Mr.

Mr. Brudenell, finding that he could not detain her, followed her to the anti-room. "May I," said he, "interpret those expressions as indicative of your friendly sentiments for one, who seems to step in unseasonably to deprive you of what you have esteemed your hereditary rights?"

"If you mean my brother," returned Lady Caroline, "these arms are ready to clasp him to my heart."

"Poor Henry!" said Mr. Brudenell, tears coursing down his venerable cheek. "He would, indeed, have rejoiced to have seen this day, to have been welcomed to his father's house, and to have found in his sister the most generous of women.—Alas! he has long since paid the debt of nature, in sickness, sorrow, and penury,—in a hostile country. But his orphan girl survives to claim your goodness."

"Ah!"

“ Ah !” exclaimed Lady Caroline with eagerness, “ is she not your Sophia ?”

“ The child of my daughter and your brother,” continued Mr. Brudenell, presenting Sophia, who had followed him with timid steps. “ The dear girl claims a fraternal interest in your affections, as the sole representative of her brave *ill-fated* father. O ! Lady Caroline, when you know her heart as I know it, you will indeed clasp her to yours.”

“ My dearest Sophia,” said Lady Caroline, who certainly never looked more amiable than when dressed in the tears which gushed from her eyes at Mr. Brudenell’s affecting address, “ we must begin to love one another with fervour immediately : consider the years that we have lost.”

Anxious to improve the impulse of nature into a religious sentiment, Mr.
Brudenell

Brudenell observed, that the friendships of truly virtuous minds could not be limited by time.

“ You both,” observed he, “ appear to look forward to a long series of years ; but should any unforeseen incident terminate your earthly prospects, eternity will afford you ample space to cultivate and improve the social affections. We know that the next world is a state of blessed society ; and we are not forbidden to hope that this blessing will in part proceed from a reunion with those whom we love.”

Lady Caroline wished to condemn Mr. Brudenell for unseasonable profing ; but, turning her eyes upon his countenance, she beheld it irradiated by an expression which was the reverse of dullness and melancholy. A serene smile, a placid brow, lips that seemed to utter some pious ejaculation, and eyes uplifted towards the region of eternal peace, bespoke

spoke a mind able to meditate on eternity, not only without terror, but with sublime joy.

Is there a more enviable being in *this* world, than a man who can thus anticipate the next? What true dignity and real greatness of character are acquired by frequently reflecting on the audit at which we must one day deliver in our tale of intrusted talents! Sustained by the holy confidence which a well-spent life inspires, Mr. Brudenell calmly advanced to meet the mean, debased, yet proud Earl of Glanville; who, poor amid the hoards of superfluous wealth, timid while possessing plenitude of power, and wretched while surrounded by every earthly good, now saw the veil torn away by which he had concealed the foul deformity of his cancerous guilt from the world, his idolized reputation blasted, and himself obliged to confess, not only with his tongue, but by his actions, the
littleness

littleness of craft and the imprudence of dissimulation. The man of the world who has lived to see all his projects disconcerted, all his hopes blasted, all his arts discovered, and himself "benetted" in his declining age with the evils that he wished to avoid, will pity this great master of deception, while, with affected kindness and real aversion, he received his grand-daughter from the hand of Mr. Brudenell. Prepossessed with a conviction that he was *compelled* to do this act of justice, his native haughtiness had just fortified his weak spirits with the determination that Sophia should pay dearly for Mr. Brudenell's impertinent resolution of seeing her restored to the rights of her ancestors. But, as he coolly stooped to bestow a faint kiss on the kneeling girl, her resemblance to the unfortunate Miss Aubrey struck him to the heart. Horror and remorse once more subdued the feeble resolution that
arrogance

arrogance had inspired. He folded his arms around his revived Sophia, while nature spoke in a shower of tears. Mr. Brudenell had too just an idea of the Earl's character, to commend an emotion of which he perceived he was ashamed. Affecting to attribute his agitation to indisposition, he spoke of Sophia as an admirable nurse, and ready to share with Lady Caroline in those kind attentions which infirmity always requires. Sophia now attempted to describe her grateful sense of his Lordship's tenderness, and her hope of deserving the kind regard that she had already experienced from Lady Caroline; but she was too much affected to speak coherently. Indeed her expressions would have been disregarded. The tone of her voice was too similar to that which Lord Glanville's perfidy had silenced in the grave, to allow him to think of any other object than that
which

which overwhelmed him with compunction and despair.

As my readers, doubtless, wish to know the circumstances which led the way to Miss Glanville's restoration to her family, I will in the next chapter present them with some of the leading particulars.

CHAP. XII.

The Commencement of Miss Glanville's History. Several old Acquaintances are introduced.

MR. O'FAUGHN's meritorious deeds are, doubtless, sufficiently remembered, to make every one wish that they may not pass unrewarded. During the life of the late Countess of Glanville, the friendship which subsisted between the Earl and this gentleman could only be compared to the strong attachment of Damon and Pythias, or Nisus and Euryalus. I am not fond of introducing the romantic when I can account for any action by the rules of common life ; and I am convinced it is *possible* that his Lordship's regard might be cemented by
the

the dislike, almost amounting to abhorrence, which her Ladyship evinced for one whom she generally denominated by the title of "The subtle friend." Beside, conscious that O'Faughn had much to say, my Lord, who disliked *frank* communication, was willing to pay him well for silence.

The wants of a gamester and debauchee require more than *liberality* to supply them. Any thing short of *profusion* is deemed parsimony by a man void of principle, who knows that he has power to *enforce* obedience to his demands. Mr. O'Faughn became at length so importunate as to wear out Lord Glanville's patience; and though grief for the death of his Countess furnished a good ostensible reason for leaving England, his real motive was to get rid of a man who could no longer be of any use, and who in fact was grown excessively troublesome. Immediately before
his

his departure, his Lordship inclosed a grant of an annuity of four hundred pounds in a letter to Mr. O'Faughn, replete with friendly sentiments and expressions of regret at this unavoidable separation. But though the noble giver thought this a most complete act of justice and gratitude, and exulted in the success of this consummate duplicity, the receiver was too well acquainted with the real character that he had to deal with, to be duped by false pretences of regret and esteem. O'Faughn only waited till he had spent the money which he raised by the sale of his annuity, to put the Earl's professions to the proof; and, to confess the truth, the letter in which he *required* an immediate attention to his pressing wants had more of the spirit of angry demand, than of the gentle pleadings of reciprocal attachment. It was not honoured by a reply. A second, worded in a still more peremptory style,

style, shared the same fate ; and the vindictive O'Faughn now determined to have recourse to different measures.

The ceremony of Lord Malvern's marriage to Miss Aubrey had been performed with the greatest privacy. O'Faughn was the only witness ; and so fully had Sophia confided in her lord's faith, that it was by accident she even learnt the name of the officiating clergyman. With equal confidence, yet far less purity of intention, Malvern had intrusted the whole affair to his tutor's management, who, wishing to have a stronger hold than gratitude upon his pupil's purse, took care that the marriage should be legally solemnized, and also possessed himself of a certificate, properly executed, to hold up over the head of the recreant bridegroom, in case he should refuse his diabolical coadjutor such immunities as he might require.

From the period of Sophia's seclusion to the death of the Countess of Glanville, O'Faughn found this certificate as sure a source of wealth as the title-deeds of a considerable estate. He had only to hint qualms of conscience to possess any indulgence that his depraved appetite required. Very soon after his patron's second marriage, Mr. O'Faughn had such a severe fit of penitence, as induced him to travel into Glamorganshire, with the express design of ascertaining the existence of the former wife. Of this he was soon convinced; and so far did his love of *justice* prevail, as to induce him to write to the Earl of Glanville, and urge him, by many pious motives, to clear his soul from the heavy load of Sophia's wrongs: at that time a vacancy in the rich living of O—— was hourly expected; and Lord Glanville answered these *holy* admonitions, by an assurance

assurance that he now looked forward with pleasure to an opportunity of fixing his *earliest* and *dearest* friend in a situation so admirably adapted to his talents and character. O'Faughn found his desire of reforming the morals of an extensive parish prevail over his wish of snatching *one reprobate* from an adulterous connexion; and he lived upon this promise till the incumbent of O—— had *successfully* combated what was expected to have proved a mortal disease. One of the letters that passed on this occasion fell into the hands of Lady Glanville; and the perusal of it at once confirmed her detestation of her lord and his sage counsellor, and imprinted on her soul a full sense of the horrors of her own situation. Aware of the evils that must attend her daughter's disputable legitimacy, yet fearful of disturbing her father's declining age by a full disclosure of her deep distress, she

purfued that method which prudence dictated, to reconcile filial piety and maternal affection, by taking care that the young lady's right to the fortune of her maternal grandfather fhould be founded on fuch ftrong *unequivocal* terms, as would fecure her the poffeffion of it, even if fome future claimant fhould ftep forth, and deny her legal right to the rich inheritance of her father.

O'Faughn's remorse at having been accelfary to Lord Glanville's criminal pleasures revived, as foon as he found himfelf deftitute and deserted by his ungrateful patron. True penitence would have pointed his refentment at himfelf, and taught him that humble contrition which might have procured mercy even for his great offences. But remorse in O'Faughn's mind was only the parent of revenge. He knew that he had the power to torture his adverfary ; and in
ufing

using that power, he determined not to be softened by that fellow-feeling which participation in misery is supposed to impart.

On his visit into Glamorganshire he had discovered, that, after struggling many years with mental disease and bodily indisposition, Sophia had recovered such a portion of reason, as to enable her to mix a little in society. She went by the name of Mrs. Herbert; her appearance and manner excited general attention; but, though curiosity had been greatly excited by the air of mystery in which her story was enveloped, she still remained faithful to the promise that she had given to her perjured lord; nor could the most prying penetration discover the source of that interesting melancholy or harmless eccentricity which were alternately visible in her behaviour. Her affecting piety, her prudence, and her delicacy, determined all

who knew her to conclude that she had met with the most cruel treatment ; and, notwithstanding the suspicious circumstances which were attached to her history, and the assurance of the farmer with whom she had been placed by O'Faughn, that she was a fine lady who had been very wicked, the prejudices which these representations excited soon yielded to the united efforts of candour and compassion, and she was generally considered as a woman "more sinned against than sinning."

Her son, the legal heir of the proud honours of Glanville, received the best education that her limited finances would allow. Desirous to make him fit for the station which his birth entitled him to claim, and cherishing the lively but carefully concealed hope that Lord Glanville would at last be just to his unoffending child, she willingly deprived herself of every superfluity, to make her
beloved

beloved Henry what his father might not blush to own. In this design she was assisted by the benevolent liberality and elegant erudition of Mr. Brudenell, a dignified clergyman, who regularly spent the summer in Mrs. Herbert's neighbourhood. A tale of woe was sure to attract this gentleman's attention. Sophia's deportment gave to hers a peculiar interest; and, from the age of fourteen, her son found in this good man an instructor, a patron, and I might add a foster-father. At the commencement of the American war the ardent spirit of young Herbert caught the general enthusiasm. He longed to vindicate his country's rights; and he found with pleasure that his mother did not oppose his wish to devote himself to a military life. Her misfortunes had given a romantic turn to her imagination; and she not only wove, in idea, the scarf of triumph for her returning hero, but

also anticipated the period when Lord Glanville, proud of his son's laurels, should acknowledge him to be worthy of the coronet to which she heard with pleasure that there was no other heir.

A cockade, and the other appendages of martial pomp, are deemed irresistible in the eyes of the fair. Captain Herbert (for I choose to use the name by which he was known) wanted not those attractions. A graceful figure, an engaging behaviour, elevated sentiments, and a frank independent mind, had already given him unbounded influence in the heart of Miss Brudenell; and during the frequent visits that he made to his patron, previous to his regiment's being ordered on foreign service, that influence led to a clandestine engagement. The young lady was prevailed on to give her hand to her lover, without waiting for her father's consent, who, though sensible of Henry's merits, foresaw many evils

evils resulting from this connexion. He was not, however, inexorable. Actuated by the purest benevolence, he forbore from aggravating the miseries into which this rash step had plunged two affectionate and deserving, though *imprudent* young people. He exhorted, pitied, and forgave them. His house afforded them an asylum till duty called his son-in-law to the continent. Mrs. Herbert determined to accompany her husband, and bequeathed her infant daughter to the care of her father. A sacred trust! and it was discharged with that religious care which the situation of the helpless orphan required. Its mother soon found, that her fond imagination had deceived her when it painted a participation in the toils and dangers of her hero in those glowing colours which are derived from poetical enthusiasm acting upon tender love. She discovered that this parti-

C 5

cipation,

cipation, instead of relieving, multiplied the sorrows of sympathy. She shared, indeed, her husband's dangers, not with the soft touches of refined sentiment, but with the acute anguish of torturing sensibility; and he felt a new sentiment of terror repress the energies of his soul in the hour of combat, at the prospect of the dreadful calamities in which his beloved Charlotte must be involved, in case of his death, or the defeat of the royal forces.

The sufferings of this amiable pair, however, though acute, were not protracted. Mrs. Herbert soon fell into a decline, in consequence of the hardships that she endured, and the privation of those comforts which she was accustomed to enjoy under her father's roof. Her afflicted husband did not long survive her. Instead of returning loaded with military honours, and crowned with fame, as his fond mother predicted, Mr. Herbert

bert perished in a distant land, under the rigours of severe service. Not in the bed of honour, not in one of those successful expeditions which may be said to plant the laurel on the grave of the hero who purchases glory with life,—but in an enterprize which, though planned by ability, and conducted with gallantry, terminated in disaster and defeat. Such is the uncertain estate of human affairs! Such are the decrees of that Wisdom which does not always assign “the race to the swift, nor the battle to the strong!” An unforeseen contingency warps the expected issue, and gives occasion to slander and malevolence to aggravate the poignant feelings of misfortune, by referring events to depravity and folly which should be ascribed to the intervention of those second causes which often blast the projects of finite man.

The heart of the unfortunate Sophia, which had been deeply lacerated by for-

mer wounds, was mortally penetrated by the premature death of *that* boy for whose sake she had long *endured* life. Previous to her dissolution, she sent for her little grand-daughter, whom she embraced with all the agonizing transport of one who clasps the last remaining relic of some fondly beloved object. She delivered to Mr. Brudenell a written narrative of her unfortunate life, and a piece of needle-work which, with affecting simplicity, she called "Poor Harry's cruel father." It was, indeed, an extraordinary performance, by which the lovely maniac in her lucid intervals had barbed the dart that rankled in her breast, by executing with her own hair the resemblance of Lord Glanville's well-remembered features, and decorating the portrait with a border of flowers, as wild and fantastic as Ophelia's "coronet weeds."

"I shall

“I shall not,” said she with short convulsive sighs, “tell you his name; for I must keep my word now that I am going to poor Harry. My head has been very wrong; but in that paper I have only written what is true. It is of no use to complain,” continued she, casting a lingering look on this representation of Lord Glanville. “My hair is changed grey since I worked it. Ah, if his heart were but changed too! poor Harry and I might then meet him in the other world.”

Similar sentiments characterized the paper in which the meek sufferer had recorded the history of her wrongs. It was a simple and affecting narrative, destitute of every artful embellishment; and oftener lamenting her own credulity, than reprobating the conduct of her enemies. True to her promise, the name of her seducer was not divulged; but several circumstances attending her
brother's

brother's death so exactly corresponded with the duel between Lord Glanville and Captain Aubrey, that Mr. Brudenell was soon led to suspect that that nobleman must be the ancestor of his little charge; and he lamented that the *proofs* were not sufficiently strong to authorise him in making an effort to restore his dear Sophia to the rights which she might justly claim.

I shall speak in another chapter of the principles by which this child's education was directed; and only observe in this place, that Mr. Brudenell's fortune was sufficient to allow it to be conducted on what is called a liberal plan. The cultivation of the heart and temper were chiefly attended to; yet the grace of exterior accomplishments was not neglected. Sophia Herbert was the idol of the small but respectable circle in which she moved, and was early distinguished for delicacy, good sense, amiable vivacity, and

and marked propriety. Her filial affection for her grandfather was generally commended; but the extravagance of panegyric was here checked with an observation, that it was impossible not to be attached to such a charming old man.

Among the comforts that Providence kindly scatters over our earthly pilgrimage, none are superior to those which we derive from seeing the young mind on which we have bestowed our most assiduous attention expand into the character that we wished to form. Mr. Brudenell was fully sensible of his happiness in this particular. He always looked on Sophia as the germ of immortality; and he carefully watched the progress of these blossoms, which were to bear fruit in the regions of bliss. Yet, though her eternal interests formed the principal part of his solicitude, he was not inattentive to her temporal concerns.

cerns. The result of his inquiries concerning the private sentiments and character of the Earl of Glanville convinced him, that he was a very improper person to be intrusted with the education of any child who was not intended to be polished into deistical indecision; and, from the best motives, he determined to refrain from taking any measures that might ultimately compel him to abandon the instruction of Sophia, till her principles were so far fixed, as to prevent any danger of their being corrupted by the smooth insinuations of infidelity.

Affairs were in this situation, when O'Faughn, who had traced Sophia Aubrey's lineal descendant and representative, introduced himself to Mr. Brudenell, and offered his assistance to restore the young Lady to the rights of her birth. He professed to be a sincere friend to the injured wife; but hitherto, from some unlucky circumstances, too
much

much in the power of Lord Glanville to discharge the weight that *lay heavy* upon his soul. He spoke of the necessities of approaching age ; and, after expatiating on his moderate views, declared himself willing to leave all to the young lady's gratitude. There is a method of telling a tale that may be called the over-plausible, and which is certainly calculated to destroy the effect that it is intended to produce. Mr. Brudenell knew the world ; and the very measures which O'Faughn took to persuade him that he was a credulous, well-meaning, unfortunate man, convinced this penetrating observer, that he had to encounter the wiles of a thorough-paced villain. By a series of judicious inquiries, he led O'Faughn to confess, that he had been Sophia Aubrey's nuptial father ; and he soon discovered the important secret, that the officiating clergyman was still alive. The unfortunate lady's narrative

tive of her own life supplied several clues, of which O'Faughn was not aware, respecting the time when and the place where the ceremony was performed; and Mr. Brudenell, coolly thanking the villain for his proffered services, observed, that he already knew enough; as an advertisement in the newspapers would bring on a *complete* illustration of that mysterious transaction, and *compel* Lord Glanville to acknowledge his granddaughter, to whom he knew the greater part of his property must descend, in conformity to the settlement of the hereditary estate; she being in fact the only *legal* heir. I would here observe, that O'Faughn had formerly amused his patron with an aggravated account of Sophia's imminent danger, from a design of betraying him into a second marriage, which this consummate politician did not doubt would tend to confirm his own influence, by involving the unhappy

happy nobleman in a fresh maze of troubles.

The natural feelings of mankind lead us to exult when one notorious villain is duped by a greater proficient in deceit, or when artful iniquity is defeated in its aims by the *steady* wisdom of discerning integrity. Like Alnascher in the Arabian tale, Mr. O'Faughn perceived that he had kicked down the fair edifice of his future prosperity, and that he had nothing to do but to burn the certificate, which he just considered as a draft for unlimited credit, or to accept whatever recompense Mr. Brudenell might think proper to propose. He preferred the latter ; and, laying the important paper upon the table, observed, that that document would save any farther trouble, and that he rested with confidence on Mr. Brudenell's justice and honour for his own remuneration.

“ I have

“ I have hitherto,” said that gentleman, “ endeavoured to answer the demands that have been made upon me ; but, as I conceive it to be a part of honour to avoid giving false hopes, you must allow me, Sir, to observe, that this business must undergo a little investigation before I can determine to what your claims *really* amount ; and should this affair undergo a discussion in a court of justice, any pecuniary engagements between you and me will wear an iniquitous appearance. In my opinion, your demands should rather be addressed to the Earl of Glanville, whose secret you have for many years faithfully kept, and, to my apprehension, only reluctantly and partially discovered. I cannot help observing also, that you could not have the least right *to*, or honest interest *in*, this certificate. By whatever means you *obtained* it, Lady Malvern’s issue are the persons-

persons to whom it most justly belongs. To the contents of this purse, Sir, you are perfectly welcome; your expressions have led me to conclude that you are labouring under some *immediate* distress; and when a fellow-creature can urge that plea, I do not make a severe scrutiny into his former conduct."

The classical reader may trace a resemblance between O'Faughn's disappointment, and that of Ixion, when angry Jupiter sent the latter a cloud instead of the goddess whom he presumptuously expected. His present necessities had so far subdued his lofty spirit, that he readily pocketed Mr. Brudenell's purse; but, considering the present rather as an insult than a favour, he resigned all his sullen soul to the impulse of vengeance. He now found himself in the situation of a fang-drawn lion; and his mortification was complete, when the next post brought him a *most friendly* letter

letter from the Earl of Glanville, lamenting that, owing to his frequent change of residence, his welcome favours did not arrive in due time; and protesting, that he should always find him most affectionately inclined to fulfil all the claims of friendship, of which truth the inclosed draft for one hundred pounds might be considered as an additional confirmation. His lordship was so tender of his friend's feelings, that he forbore to drop one hint on the subject of extravagance, though he had formerly said *something* on that head; but as I cannot believe that this extraordinary delicacy proceeded from true affection, I must suppose that his lordship thought it the properest way of replying to some very strong paragraphs in O'Faughn's letter; having always observed, that when two people mutually hate and fear each other, the acrimony of one of the parties always produces

duces a superabundant flow “ of the milk of human kindness” from the other.

If one particle of virtue had existed in Mr. O’Faughn’s mind, I should request the good-natured reader to feel for his present embarrassments. The labours of a long life of villany frustrated, by precipitate petulance, in one single moment. A person whom he might at any time intimidate liberated from his power, and himself compelled either to starve or to live upon the *scanty* alms which Mr. Brudenell had plainly told him he would allow to his distresses, though he detested his conduct. I am conscious that I spend too much time in describing the feelings of this detestable being. I will therefore briefly state, that he did not long survive the contempt, obloquy, and insignificance into which he was now plunged. To a day spent in the practice of cool, impassioned iniquity, ensued an evening of want, remorse,

remorse, and disgrace. He saw the sun of life decline, and shuddered with apprehension at the idea of the awful morning that would succeed the dreary night of death.

Very similar were the sensations of his partner in iniquity, the proud, injurious Earl of Glanville, when he received Mr. Brudenell's first letter, informing him that he was anxious to present to him a grand-daughter worthy of his fondest affection, whose full title to his fortune could be proved by the *clearest evidence*. Though very little was said of O'Faughn's agency, the Earl's fears anticipated that fact; and his terror was increased by perceiving, from the style of the letter, that Mr. Brudenell was a man whom it would be *difficult to dupe*, and *impossible to corrupt*.

Being, however, determined to grasp at every shadow of hope, his lordship, in his answer, indicated a polite surprise

at being addressed on the subject on which Mr. Brudenell had done him the honour to enter into a correspondence. He flourished with amazing address on the blessing of an unspotted reputation, and mentioned it as a *fact*, exceedingly well known in the world, that Lady Caroline Glanville was his only legitimate child. He expressed full confidence in Mr. Brudenell's honour and veracity; but gently intimated, that characters who were above deception themselves were most easily made the tools of artful villains, who carried on their nefarious designs against the peace of society principally by arming one worthy person in opposition to another. After hinting that it was not a safe amusement to sport with the reputation and feelings of a man of eminent rank and unblemished honour, he concluded with the threefold subscription, that he

was Mr. Brudenell's faithful friend, and very devoted and obedient servant.

Mr. Brudenell knew more of European manners than the ambassador of Bantam, and consequently assigned the proper interpretation to this confused mass of intimidation and civility. His answer ran in the following style :

“ *To the Earl of GLANVILLE.*

“ My Lord,

“ When I solicited the honour of your lordship's correspondence, I wished not only to perform an act of justice to a very amiable young lady ; but also to exonerate your mind from those painful feelings which must ever be incident to the conscious neglect of a *positive* duty.

“ I claim no exemption from human errors, and can recollect many instances in which my conduct has been influenced by that credulity which you are pleased
to

to consider as an inherent part of my character. But former mistakes can have no weight in this particular case, where my opinion is borne out by *stubborn facts*, by such *full, clear, and decisive* testimony, as any court of justice would approve. Though *I* can have nothing to fear from the event of a trial that cannot affect either *my* character, or *my* fortune, I confess it would be repugnant to my feelings to have recourse to what many may consider as a vindictive measure; and I wish my young charge to owe *every* thing to your lordship's kindness, and *nothing* to your fears.

“ The facts which I can *establish* are these. Your lordship, in the autumn of 1752, gave a promise of marriage to a young woman of Oxford named Sophia Aubrey. This promise was fulfilled in London, at her lodgings, on the third of October in that year. A clergy-

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man

man of the church of England named Williams performed the ceremony. He is now living, and ready to attest this circumstance upon oath ; and, however reluctant your lordship's friend Mr. O'Faughn may be to give *any* testimony that may injure *your* interests, I can prove that he has acknowledged being present, and that he officiated as the nuptial father. This lady survived till the year 1779, and above five years after the date of your marriage with Lord Lewson's daughter, by whom you had the child whom the world recognizes by the name of Lady Caroline Glanville.

“ Previous to your separation from your lawful wife, she bore you a son, who was known by the name of Henry Herbert, though he was in fact Lord Viscount Malvern, and heir of your earldom. Ignorant of his rank (for his

mother never divulged the melancholy secret which she had promised *you* to keep), he entered into the army, and perished in America, leaving by his wife (my only daughter, who died a few months before him) the child whom I am desirous of restoring to the rights of her birth.

“ I am well aware, my lord, that a prosecution of those rights might lead to circumstances extremely painful to yourself, and injurious to the interests of the lady who now considers herself as *sole* heiress of your fortunes. As I am pursuing *justice*, not *vengeance*, I shall be willing to listen to any reasonable terms of accommodation. But your lordship must allow me to hint, that the style which you thought proper to adopt in your last letter is not likely to *expedite* that desirable event. I will not, however, take advantage of what

I consider to be the ebullition of surprise and resentment. I will wait for the result of a cooler moment, before I pursue any decisive steps; and in the mean time I have the honour to remain

“Your lordship’s most obedient servant,
“ANTHONY BRUDENELL.”

In his reply, Lord Glanville touched a little upon the pathetic. He lamented that an error, the only deviation from moral rectitude with which his memory could charge him, should be attended with such lasting inconveniencies, as even to threaten his declining age with the most grievous calamities. He very feelingly affirmed, that his few hours of repose were abridged by Mr. Brudenell’s *cruel* letter; and he affected the utmost astonishment at hearing that his connexion with Miss Aubrey could be so dis-

disguised as even to assume the shape of a legal marriage. He called the Supreme Being to witness that he never had the smallest intention of contracting such an engagement with her; and he avowed his determination to scrutinize Mr. Brudenell's certificates with the utmost care, as soon as he returned to England; being persuaded that he should soon discover the *frauds* which had imposed on that gentleman's unsuspecting credulity. Lord Glanville then proceeded to say, that, as he had directed his conduct by principles

- “ Beyond the fix'd and settled rules
- “ Of vice and virtue in the schools;
- “ Beyond the letter of the law,
- “ Which keeps the vulgar mind in awe;”

he was ready to make a handsome provision for the descendant of a very artful woman, whose blandishments had, he acknowledged, seduced him from the

narrow path of duty ; and he felt more inclined to this act of generosity, as the object of it had received a correct education, and bore a most amiable character. He would, therefore, beg leave to present Mr. Brudenell with ten thousand pounds for the use of his young charge ; and, as he had not the least doubt of this offer being accepted, he would immediately write to his solicitor to prepare legal securities. In return for what he knew Mr. Brudenell must think very liberal treatment, he only requested privacy ; it being the first wish of his heart to pass through life unnoticed, and to avoid that eclat which generally follows munificent actions.

Mr. Brudenell's reply was short and significant. He observed, that Miss Glanville claimed *justice* from her grandfather ; *generosity*, therefore, was out of the question. In regard to any imposi-
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tions having been practised upon himself, the tale that he had heard was too unvarnished, and the evidence too *close*, to admit of any evasion; and he could assure Lord Glanville, that it was himself who was *deceived* if he supposed that he had only been united to Miss Aubrey by a fictitious marriage. "As to the character of that ill-fated lady," continued Mr. Brudenell, "I witnessed her sufferings, her meekness, her prudence, and her piety, for near twenty years; and I am always inclined to believe, that those who can thus sustain calamity must have been guided through life by settled principles, totally irreconcilable with your description of Miss Aubrey's early conduct. But, my lord, *I* am not authorized to require from you that account which you must one day give of *your part* in this affair. I only call upon you to do justice to her posterity; and believe me when I

tell you, that as soon as you have summoned the virtuous resolution to comply with my demands, you will find your bosom relieved from a weight of insupportable anguish. Your remorse for your early deviations from the path of duty cannot now affect your wife, or your son. They are gone to a state where cruelty never can afflict, nor repentance soothe, the disembodied spirit. Your penitence can only be shewn by your conduct to their living representative, who is also the only surviving relation of Captain Aubrey.”

Mr. Brudenell then proceeded to say that though the sum which his lordship had offered was adequate to all Miss Glanville's *present* expectations ; still, as it was far beneath her just rights ; as it was given rather as matter of favour than in compliance with just claims ; and, above all, as it was to be purchased
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by her consenting to *conceal* her birth, he must steadily refuse every compromise that did not do justice to his countess's memory ; and unless the next letter was more satisfactory, he should feel himself compelled to indict his lordship for a criminal breach of the laws of his country.

I will not trouble the reader with more of this detailed account. Suffice it to say, that, hunted out of every evasion, Lord Glanville was forced to send over a written acknowledgement of his marriage to Miss Aubrey, and of the legitimacy of her son, as the only means of deterring Mr. Brudenell from commencing a prosecution. It was, however, agreed that, to preserve him from any attack from the Lewson family on account of his second marriage with Lady Caroline, Miss Glanville's birth should not be *openly* acknowledged, but that she should still be known by the

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name

name of Herbert during his lordship's life.

Mr. Brudenell sincerely rejoiced that he was permitted to retain the guardianship of his young charge, as his lordship was nowise impatient to embrace this addition to his family. It was the wish of this pious pastor to strengthen the mind of Sophia with the pure principles of religion, and to prepare her for the trials which those principles would undergo, when she should remove from the safe shelter of elegant lettered privacy into the turmoil of the great world. Considering her as likely to be assailed by the shafts of deism, or seduced by the syren snares of gay indifference, he inculcated early habits of piety, and built that piety on a clear conception of the tenets on which her faith was founded. But, as Mr. Brudenell's system may be best explained by detailing the conversation that took place between him and his

his grand-daughter, when her introduction at Glanville castle was finally resolved upon, I will appropriate an entire chapter to this subject; premising, that my readers must prepare themselves to meet with *old* maxims, rather than *new* ideas, on this fashionable subject of *literary inquiry*.

CHAP. XIII.

Mrs. Prudentia throws down the Gauntlet of Controversy ; or, in other words, defends what former Ages considered as most valuable and most wise.

IN conformity with the arrangements that had previously taken place between Lord Glanville and Mr. Brudenell, Sophia's introduction to his lordship was to be deferred till his return to England ; and I cannot remark, that his great impatience to " see this rising honour of his blood" accelerated that event. Indeed, after the earl's return, many circumstances unhappily occurred to postpone what, with more politeness than sincerity, he termed the much-

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desired

desired pleasure. Sometimes his house was quite full of common-place company, sometimes he was stretched upon the rack of business, at other times his nerves were unstrung and his mind out of tune.

The time, however, will at length arrive, when every subterfuge must be exhausted; and the amiable Sophia, with fearful anxiety, saw herself on the eve of a most important change, that would probably give a colour to her future life. From the grand daughter of a dignified clergyman, who had for some years retired from the busy scenes of public life to his parochial residence, she was to consider herself as the heiress of an earldom's wealth; from elegant sufficiency, she was now to habituate herself to unbounded opulence; she was to pass from study, contemplation, and the knowledge of herself, to the eternal bustle of laborious idleness; from the
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consciousness of duty, confined to a narrow but clearly defined path, to that variety of claims, and those jarring interests, which frequently defeat the “genuine schemes of defective virtue,” and shipwreck all the hopes that are not founded on the Rock of Ages.

I must premise, that Sophia had more than completed her twentieth year. She had seen enough of the great world to appreciate its real worth; she was passionately fond of Mr. Brudenell, and devoted to reflection and tranquil amusements. All these observations are intended to qualify my reader's astonishment, when I inform them that she was *terrified* at the prospects which now awaited her. She not only visited with regret her beloved flowers, and every rural walk to which she was attached, but she also dropped a tear at parting with the aged paupers who were her pensioners; and her last visits to the
benevolent

benevolent institutions by which she had improved her native village, were embittered by the sad reflection that she should never more see eyes so disposed to welcome her approach with undisguised attachment, or to lament her absence with such unfeigned sorrow.

“ You have convinced me,” said she to Mr. Brudenell on the last evening which they spent together in the parlour at the rectory, “ that Lord Glanville has a claim upon my duty equal to yourself; and that I ought to endeavour to administer relief to his tortured mind, and also to prepare myself for the station which I may one day fill, by acquiring its habits and discovering its occupations and duties. I acquiesce, my dear sir; my reason is indeed convinced, but my *heart* is refractory. I fear myself when I am removed from your judicious eye. I am persuaded that I cannot forget Lord Glanville’s

ville's cruel conduct. I dread his dark machinations, I detest his hypocrisy. When I do right, you reward me with your smiles; when I err, your frank reproof at once convinces me of my fault and renews my self-confidence. But how shall I interpret the smiles and frowns of a professed dissembler? Lady Caroline too, a wit and a deist, yet engaging even in her errors, frank, lively, and eccentric.—O dear grand-papa! how different must she be from those friends to whom I could open my whole heart! with whom I could be grave or gay, whimsical or serious, without fear of having my designs misconstrued: I might rather say, secure either of passing without *minute* observation, or of confirming *partial* affection. I will not talk of the host of evils that my fears have conjured up; of professed wits without common sense, of topplings refined into insipidity, of boors brutalized into most
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agreeable creatures, of female duffers lost to all sense of shame, or titled swindlers who have forgotten all principles of honesty. O my best friend! what will your poor Sophia do among these nondescript animals?"

"I see," returned Mr. Brudenell, "that your regret at leaving us has induced you to act like a child who dresses up a spectre and is then terrified at its own fabrication. The beings that you have described are indeed oftener found in high life than in the lower orders of society. It is their sphere, their proper place of action; and we should no more wonder at their germinating there, than at finding shrews at Billingsgate, or pick-pockets in St. Giles's. But remember, Sophia, the rich soil that gives birth to these *fungi* also brings forth the most choice productions. If you are often annoyed by knaves and fools in ermine,

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you will frequently find more polished manners, more enlightened views, and, let me add, superior dignity of character and sterling worth. For remember, the virtue that can resist the allurements of prosperity belongs to the higher class of angelic orders. No object is more grateful to the reflecting mind, than a good man irradiating the ample sphere of greatness. Beware, Sophia, of yielding to the common error of these querulous times. It is now the aim of too many popular writers, to feast the spleen of the lower orders, by exhibiting most degrading and false pictures of the superior classes. These people seem to make poverty a passport to heaven; but let us remember, that the poor have their duties as well as the rich, the great as well as the small; so also has the middle station, which we used to deem the safest because exposed to fewest temptations. My sentiments on
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this last point, however, have changed, since I have of late years perceived that the manners of this very valuable class of society have deviated from the charming simplicity of sober conduct, that they affect a false polish, and imitate *at least* the vices and follies of those higher ranks whom they affect to despise. So great is the revolution that has taken place in my memory in this portion of my fellow subjects, that I am fearful our immediate descendants will seek for examples of the *modest* virtues, œconomy, prudence, perseverance, temperance, and fortitude among that *great world* of which you have formed such a tremendous idea. Perhaps, too, the mansion of the nobleman may be the last residence of religion; for how seldom do we now hear her voice in the sabbath-haunts of the merchant, the tradesman, the opulent manufacturer, or the professional character! Who is there in the
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above description that retains the *serious piety* which their forefathers found to be not only their best defence from temptation, but the enviable privilege of mediocrity?

“I do not digress, Sophia. I wish *you* to be reconciled to the rank of life to which you *were born*. I have laboured to restore you to it, in the hope that you will “be a burning and a shining light,” even in the midst of an evil world. Let your soul rise to the performance of the extensive duties which your situation requires. I have a firm persuasion that you will thus act; for you possess one invaluable advantage which the nobility of this kingdom *often* want, you *have been regularly educated as a Christian*.

“It is my opinion, that our most valuable virtues have been much injured by our becoming too speculative and refined.

fined. What mother, I mean what conscientious mother, of common abilities, who reads one of our finely woven diffuse systems of instruction, but must tremble at the complex office in which she is going to engage, where she first takes her little one on her knee, and endeavours to instil the elements of knowledge, or the rudiments of principle? Alarmed by a terrific assemblage of metaphysical terms; puzzled by rules for forming *habits* of virtue and preventing adventitious vices or indiscretions, by removing him out of the reach of impropriety, or by leaving him to suffer the natural consequences of his faults; bewildered by positive assurances, that obstinacy may be rendered indelible by *one* instance of injudicious opposition, that character entirely depends on early combinations, and that the ties of nature are nonentities; severely prohibited
from

from enforcing the experience of others, or from directing the infant mind, lest she should inculcate *incurable* prejudices ; I think there is reason to fear, that a conscientious mother will shrink from such an awful responsibility, and rather relinquish the instruction of her child, than attempt to learn the abstruse science of *rational* education.

“Blessed be heaven, Sophia, the parental duty is not so *complex* ! Let us early bring our young ones to the knowledge of their Redeemer ; and the rest of our labours will not only be capable of *clear* definition, but *easy* in practice. I never puzzled you with abstruse inquiries into the nature of truth ; but I taught you, that without this quality you could not hope to appear with joy in the presence of its divine Author. I did not build your virtues on a total seclusion from all bad examples ; for I know that hu-
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man nature is frail, that the best of us transgress; and I never yet found any *perfect* beings to place around you. You saw *my* infirmities; how could I conceal them from my constant companion? I did not lay traps for your integrity, by affecting to gloss over my errors with specious excuses; but I frankly confessed the faults of my nature, and owned that I was finite, sinful man. I taught you to subdue your evil propensities, not by charging them to the mistakes of your instructors, not by pointing out the *natural* ill-consequences that would flow from such faults, not by urging the unfavourable opinion which the world would form of your character: I admitted, indeed, *some* of these considerations as secondary motives to praiseworthy exertions; but I founded your moral rectitude on the principle, that no good deed would go without its reward,

nor any premeditated, unrepented sin without its future punishment. I told you that there were degrees of glory ; and that the more conspicuous your worth, the brighter would be your diadem. I did not invigorate your passions, nor did I attempt to eradicate them ; but I strove to render them the allies of religion. By inculcating the doctrine of divine omnipresence, I gave you a rule of action infinitely more valuable than all that philosophy ever framed ; a rule that will regulate your reflections when you are in your closet, that will inspire you with virtuous singularity when a multitude would draw you into evil, that will teach you justice to the *meanest individual*, and will give you fortitude and consistency before the proudest earthly tyrant. Shew me any other scheme of tuition that can supply such an antidote against evil, or such a preservative of innocence.

“ Your

“ Your views of your fellow-creatures, Sophia, were guided by the same admirable system ; and the experience of past ages proves, that it was framed with the deepest insight into our natures. Supposing that I could have guarded you from the contact, or rather the *perception* of human infirmity in early life, that I could have surrounded you with nothing but what was wise and commendable, and convinced you (ah, what contradictory presumption !) that I was a *perfect mortal*, how could I have fortified your feeling heart against the pangs and disappointments to which a more extensive view of life and manners must have exposed you ? Suppose I had taught you, that virtue is the *sure* road to temporal happiness, that actions have a natural *invariable* consequence, that truth *always* prevails, that characters are *uniform*, and that good intentions are *sure* to produce laudable effects, how would

your faith have been staggered when you first met with a worthy person in distress, when you saw events springing from causes which no human prescience could foresee, while the plans of profound wisdom were frustrated by minute trifling occurrences ! Should you have been able to command your resentment when you heard truth overborne by calumny, when you saw the good man deviate from his integrity, or when you perceived your originally pure designs warped by passion, till you *ended in error* what you *commenced in rectitude* ? If I had never told you any thing of the depravity, weakness, and final destination of man, how could you have reconciled this view of life with the wisdom, justice, and goodness of an Almighty Deity ?

“ I have always told you, my child, that we are heirs of sin and sorrow ; that we must guard against the former, and submit to the latter, as the just punishment

nishment not only of *natural* frailty, but of *wilful* offence. Do you now regret the tears that I suffered you to shed over your old nurse Hannah Willis? I know my neighbours blamed me. You were too young, they said, to be acquainted with grief; a sick bed was a disgusting object to a child, and death would *terrify* you. If my tenderness could have preserved you from sorrow, sickness, and death, I would have kept my darling from contemplating those awful objects in the more remote person of a faithful domestic. But since the next day, nay the next moment, might have deprived you of me, since even your own blooming health and tender years were unable to ward off the strokes of disease or death, I judged it expedient to take the first proper opportunity of shewing you to what you are born. The destroying angel had struck our dwelling; and I refused to

remove the victim that he had smitten, from the fear that my Sophia's vivacity should suffer a *temporary* interruption. On the contrary, I took that opportunity to initiate you into the practice of the acknowledged duties of humanity. I read you lessons of forbearance, compassion, and resignation to the divine will, in the example of a sufferer whom you tenderly loved. I permitted you to see death, not in its most tremendous form, not in the agonies of the separating moment, nor in the humiliating change which sometimes precedes our being consigned to our kindred dust; but when, recently deserted of its coelestial inhabitant, our clay-built tenement appears an awful but instructive ruin; a corrective to vanity, levity, and licentiousness, and an excitement to pious hopes and salutary restraints. Tell me, Sophia, do you think that I needlessly exercised your feelings? was I to blame
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in teaching you what you *are*, and what you *must* be?"

"No, dear Sir," returned the young lady, who did not once yawn during this long declamation. "I perfectly recollect what I then felt, and am convinced that I have derived infinite advantages from those hopes of immortality which you then infused. I felt that I would not, for all the pleasures the world affords, commit an action the remembrance of which would increase the pangs of my last moments; and that nothing could be put in competition with the interests of that "spark of heavenly flame" that can never be extinguished. I have derived the same advantage from your counsel in other particulars. Hitherto I have walked safely; but is it not because I have been hitherto guided and upheld by you?"

"My best Sophia," answered Mr. Brudenell, concealing the grateful tear

which started into his eye, “remember this as one of my counsels,—perform with cheerfulness the duties which are required of you. Had I consulted my own inclinations, I should have kept you *close* by my side, and enjoyed your sweet society till the last moment of my existence. But could I have *justly* done this, when I found that you were born to a widely-extended sphere of general usefulness? I had formed you to the practice of piety, benevolence, and integrity; to whom should we wish the Glanville fortune to descend, but to a person thus instructed, and that person also the lawful heiress?

“I must indulge the visions which my fond partiality suggests. How many thousands will bless the day that puts you in possession of the rights of your ancestors. Do not suffer your own spirits to be depressed by an apprehension that your trials will exceed your
powers

powers of resistance. Doing an act of justice to yourself, and vindicating the memory of your father and grandmother, cannot be called throwing yourself in the way of temptation. By claiming your birthright, you fulfil one of the first principles of nature; by neglecting to do it, you would, in my opinion, omit a positive duty. Do not, therefore, speculate on distant contingencies, or remote possibilities. Your path is plain before you; and while you continue to act as you ought, you are encouraged to hope for divine assistance.

“ We do not choose our progenitors, my love; and it would be ungrateful in us to quarrel with those whom Providence has given us. The command to honour our parents is positive; and though you cannot feel love or esteem for Lord Glanville, you may afford him duty. Whatever provocations he may have given you, they cannot be greater

than the power of Christian forgiveness. However enormous may be his offences against divine and human laws, *you* are not called to execute justice on the culprit. His present situation claims your pity; for he is now wretched, and by his miseries affords an awful instance of those visible acts of divine government by which the Author of Nature shows that he still reigns over those refractory rebels who try to disprove his supremacy. Your grandfather has gone on and prospered in his wickedness; no physical evils, no sudden concussion of the elements, no excruciating bodily pains have fallen upon him. His fortunes have not been shaken by political changes; he has escaped from the tribunal of earthly justice, and has reached the period of declining life with "all his honours blooming on his head." Yet Lord Glanville is wretched, wretched through the natural secret consequences of his crimes. He feels the gnawings
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of never-ceasing though concealed remorse, and the loud acclamations of awakened conscience. He trembles at that unknown futurity which he has pretended to deny. He has exhausted the cup of transitory pleasure, yet he wishes to remain sipping the bitter dregs of joyless life, being conscious that he has rejected the cordial of immortality. I conceive, my dear child, that I cannot supply you with a stronger incentive to hold fast the precepts of piety and integrity, than by placing before you such an example as Lord Glanville's. His smothered anguish will excite your liveliest commiseration ; for can there be, in all the number of indigent creatures whom your purse may relieve in future, so calamitous a being as an aged infirm infidel, who sees an unfathomable gulph beneath him, while the tottering pinnacle on which he stands crumbles every

moment from beneath his trembling feet?"

Sophia burst into tears at this affecting portrait, and promised to remember Mr. Brudenell's injunctions, by administering to Lord Glanville all the consolation that his melancholy situation required. She acknowledged that his present state of mind must operate as a powerful antidote against the seductions of infidelity: "But," added she, "are not my principles in greater danger from the lively sarcasms and insinuating manners of Lady Caroline?"

"I should have dreaded her example extremely," resumed Mr. Brudenell, "if you had removed into that family before your principles had been sufficiently fixed, and your mind strengthened by having experienced the peaceful tranquillity, as well as the *reasonableness*, of a religious course
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of life. Had you been educated in the schools of bigotry and fanaticism, had you been taught to place piety in rigid austerity, pharisaical pride, or morose superstition, or had you mixed the genuine doctrines of religion with the artful interpolations of designing men, and blended the service of the Deity with the idolatrous worship of a seraphim, I might have feared the effects of those engaging but perverted talents; which, while exposing what is obviously wrong, will not with decent reverence abstain from casting oblique censure on what is right.

“ Apply the principles which I taught you, my dearest Sophia, in this instance, and all will be well. You are not called upon to deny Lady Caroline the just meed of praise for those valuable qualities which she *really* possesses. As nothing human can be quite perfect (for then it would become angelic); so,
again

again, man never is so depraved as to lose all traits of original purity, (for then he would become a devil). We are taught to "render unto Cæsar whatever is Cæsar's." Give Lady Caroline all the praise that her agreeable talents merit; but remember, that the inferior order of graces must not arrogate an ascendancy over the sacred hierarchy of virtues. Lady Caroline pursues transitory and temporal objects; your views are more distant and more exalted. Give her the *eclat* that she requires, allow her the limited portion of existence to which her views are confined; but beware how you sacrifice your eternal inheritance to that laugh which, however distinguished by wit, information, and fancy, must, when directed against the venerable form of religion, be esteemed the "laugh of fools."

Sophia

Sophia here interrupted Mr. Brudenell, by expressing her fears that the circumstances under which she must be introduced at Glanville-castle would preclude all hope of her being able to conciliate Lady Caroline's good opinion.

“ Perhaps not,” said he. “ The new school of morals is a great admirer of specious virtues and *outré* great actions, and continually recommends liberality, generosity, and a total disregard of pecuniary motives. Beside, though it would be wrong to trust to the holiday quality of convenience, we need not affirm that the sophisticating spirit of deism is always so active as totally to pervert natural qualities. Be prudent, my love ; do not provoke hostility ; remember that Lady Caroline has cause to consider you as an intruder. But if her character be *justly* represented to me, she is less disposed to value the gifts of fortune, than the personal appendages of
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of beauty, wit, and mental attainments. I know, Sophia, that you will not court *admiration*, and that if you think Lady Caroline amiable, you will rather rejoice at, than envy her triumphs. Considering the manner of her education, and her situation in life, it is highly probable that she has acquired some singularities. If they be innocent, seem to be pleased with them ; or at least do not exasperate her by a marked opposition. Your habits are so widely different, that your sphere of action need not interfere with hers. Do you take the *duties*, and leave to her the *vanities* of an exalted station : you will divide its pleasures between you ; she will take that portion which depends upon the *opinion* of others, and you will be possessed of what results from *self-satisfaction*. She will never envy you the commendation of being very good ; and do you suffer her to take the lead in taste, sprightliness

ness, and all those shining qualities which make up what is called *ton*. Oppose nothing but what is imprudent or criminal ; and there let your opposition be *mild*, but firm and regular. Convince her that you are neither a hypocrite nor a bigot, that you cannot temporize, and will not be misled. Reprove her follies with the silent eloquence of regular goodness ; and I have hopes, yes, Sophia, I have more than hopes, I have a joyful confidence, not only that your own virtue will come out like pure gold from the assayer's furnace, but that your example will have a blessed effect on the mind of a young lady who only wants better principles to be truly amiable. I am sometimes enthusiastic enough to believe, that Lord Glanville's horrors may be abated by your dutiful attentions ; and that if his life be spared long enough to afford time for conviction, he may renounce
his

his prejudices against a religion that teaches us to return good for evil, and supplies uniform rules of conduct adapted to every situation in life."

I shall not apologize for giving Mr. Brudenell's conversation at full length. It is impossible for me to steer entirely clear of egotism; and this gentleman's sentiments are so exactly like my own, that while I transcribe them, I feel the same satisfaction as when I am indulging in my favourite habit of digression. My readers, therefore, had better prepare themselves for a little more like the above specimen, in the course of this work; and I seriously interdict all ladies who are past the age of eighteen, from using the privilege of skipping, either Mr. Brudenell's dialogues, or my digressions. I here assure them, that they were not added in consequence of a remonstrance from my bookseller, that my manuscript was too scanty; but that
they

they are, in fact, the *original* stamina of my work, without which my labours would lose all their intrinsic value, and be as much inferior to the tales of Mother Goose, as I rank below her in the *intricacy* of my plots, or the use of *wonderful expedients*.

CHAP. XIV.

The Commencement of a reciprocal Attachment. A Lover shews great Insight into his Mistress's Character.

WE have seen Sophia reluctantly received by Lord Glanville, and welcomed by Lady Caroline with enthusiastic generosity. The former struggled hard to preserve the antipathy which he was determined to entertain against those whom he considered as intruders into his family, and disturbers of his repose. But notwithstanding the peculiar penetration with which this nobleman was endowed, he found it very difficult to discover any strong proofs of the arrogance of the lordly priest, or of the importunate

portunate pertinacity of the officious bigot ; yet, being convinced that these qualities must form the outline of Mr. Brudenell's character, he gave him credit for extraordinary prudence, and was almost tempted to admire a man whom he believed to be a greater adept in dissimulation than himself. I must, however, vindicate Lord Glanville's reputation from a charge which only his *extreme modesty* could have suggested ; for certainly the poles were not wider asunder than the heart and the countenance of this nobleman. Though it was a general rule with his intimates to interpret his assurances of esteem and regard by their direct *contraries*, even this clue often failed to disclose the intricacies of Lord Glanville's heart. I do not suppose that he had ever read the wise king of Israel's remark, that " soft words turn away wrath ;" but it was a rule with his lordship to give
soft

soft words to all, except those who were so wholly in his power that their wrath could not affect him. Not considering Mr. Brudenell in this humiliating point of view, he shaped his behaviour by the most exact rules of courtly civility ; and sometimes he felicitated himself on the conviction that he really had erased all remembrance of past injuries, and persuaded the old parson that he was a perfectly *correct*, or at least a perfectly *reformed* character.

With respect to Sophia, much against his own inclinations she daily acquired more importance in his eyes. He contrasted her active services, her uniform sweetness, her unaffected wish to please, manifested not on extraordinary occasions, but daily and hourly, with his self-engrossed, self-willed, though at times enchanting daughter. He would not allow that Sophia's superior conduct proceeded from a better system of education

education than his own ; he only thought that Brudenell had met with a more ductile pupil, or else that Lady Caroline's mind in some degree differed from that mass of subtilized matter which constitutes our intellectual part, by imbibing particles more tenacious than *yielding* wax, susceptible of every impression. In these conclusions he was, indeed, unjust both to his own abilities as a teacher, and to the retentive qualities of his disciple. He had taught her obstinacy, which he called fortitude ; selfishness, which he dignified by the name of self-esteem ; and a lofty disregard for the opinions, interests, and convenience of others, which in his vocabulary was the proper distinction of a free independent being. Lady Caroline's character most exactly tallied with this outline ; there was, indeed, on the tutor's part one little mistake, in his omitting to specify that the effect of his pre-

cepts was not to appear in her behaviour to himself.

A man so steeped in guilt as was Lord Glanville must never hope to enjoy one unembittered pleasure. When Sophia, with the smile of compassionate sweetness, presented him his composing draught, and in terms of gentle benevolence wished him a good-night, her resemblance of that injured innocent whom his guilt had consigned to a premature grave prevented him from enjoying the balmy blessing. His solitude was disturbed by the most painful reveries ; and, though his cold affections were sometimes so far stimulated as to make him regard his grand-daughter in the light of a beneficent spirit, his fancy, instead of anticipating future happy years endeared by her mild attentions, sadly wandered to the irremediable past, and painted the blessings that he might have enjoyed had he acted uprightly. These

reflections continued till the potency of the opiate overpowered weary nature ; imagination then, released from the curb of reason, recalled some of those forms which had withered into shapeless dust beneath the pressure of his neglect, his perfidy, or his revenge. Sometimes poor Aubrey stood before him, with that soul-harrowing look which he gave him on receiving the murderous bullet in his bosom. Sometimes he saw the well-remembered cherubic countenance of his son, who now appeared struggling with all the calamities that attend a deserted orphan. But a still more dreadful vision often appeared. It was his injured wife in the moment of frenzy ; her arms bound, lest they should injure her own person, her hair wildly dishevelled, and her eyes bereft of all their soft intelligence ; yet, even in madness, retaining her habits of piety and fidelity, and imploring every beholder

to pray for poor Harry's cruel father. Which-ever of the above visions employed the night, Lord Glanville awoke agitated and unrefreshed; sometimes regretting that he yet lived; sometimes fearing that dreams *might* "disturb the grave." Thus, without any bodily disease, his mind's malady gradually reduced his strength; and, though he felt himself hastening to the land where all things are forgotten, he could only read pity and sorrow in the countenances of a stranger whom he had attempted to deceive, and a near relation whom he had treated with baseness: while his daughter, whom he really loved, she who ought to be his solace in every sorrow, like the priest and the Levite in the pathetic parable of the good Samaritan, "looked at his distress, and passed by on the other side."

It is possible, however, that the silent attractions of Sophia's virtues would
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have made Lady Caroline a convert, if not to the pleasures at least to the *propriety* of filial duty, if a powerful passion had not forbidden her feeling any commiseration for her unhappy father. From what I have already said respecting Mr. Raymond, it may be guessed that her ladyship was by no means indifferent to the attractions of that gentleman. Now, though, in fact those attractions were not very numerous nor very brilliant, they acquired an adventitious importance from an extraordinary circumstance. Sir John Randolph, at whose house this all-conquering hero once intended to pass the summer, suddenly altered his behaviour to his inmate; and, though Mr. Raymond had previously declared that he felt himself perfectly comfortable, that the air agreed with his health and spirits, that Sir John's table was *almost* as well supplied with wines and eatables as a Paris hotel, and

that the neighbouring families were above the usual class of country company, he as suddenly changed his tone, and acknowledged himself to be so confoundedly bored by *detestable twaddles*, that he must post to town immediately. Doubtless, Lady Caroline Glanville was an exception to the above severe censure; for he judged it expedient to communicate to her a statement of the true motives that had expedited his departure from Randolph-hall. He declared, that the feelings of a gentleman would no longer permit him to overlook the striking incivility of his host; and, as this change took place on the very day that Lord Glanville had paid a morning visit, there was but too much ground to suppose that his lordship had been accessory to the alteration. Conscious of rectitude, Mr. Raymond declared, that he felt a noble disdain of the malice of his enemies, and consoled himself

himself with knowing that Sir John Randolph was the only gentleman in England who would not press his company for an indefinite period, and that Lord Glanville was the only nobleman who would have recourse to mean artifice to remove an object whom he viewed with as contemptible jealousy. His resentments on this occasion were so warm, that he sometimes felt tempted to take very active measures; but the radiant image of a Minerva interposed, and cast her impenetrable shield over the head of the offending tyrant. Unable to withdraw his attentions from a spot where he had been so often blessed with the communication of what he gloried to call *reciprocal* sentiments; incapable of disguise, especially when he addressed a lady whose penetration would instantly detect every subterfuge, he would unbosom his inmost soul to the only being

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whom

whom he had ever found capable of genuine greatness and elevation of mind. Though his presence was immediately required in London, on business of the utmost importance to himself and his intimate friend Lord Phantome, he had determined to stop a few days at W——, to know whether it was at Lady Caroline's request that Lord Glanville had interfered with his conduct. He acknowledged that her ladyship had a right to direct him; for he was ready to give his soul into her hands, to be modelled as she thought fit; and he should esteem himself the happiest of human beings if she would deign to point out how he might prove his profound devotion to *her* will. But as to any other influence he was invincible; and he conjured her to remember, that, though Hercules spun at the bidding of Omphale, still he was the Hercules who
tore

tore the Nemean lion, and extinguished the vital spark of the worthless Antæus. In fine, though wit, sense, information, and beauty, had *power* to make him a passive captive, impertinence would trace in him the soul of a demigod.

I am afraid that some of my readers will find it difficult to understand Mr. Raymond's letter; but it is sufficient that the lady to whom it was addressed found it not only a perspicuous but an inimitable composition. Her father's visit to the Randolphs, made at such a peculiar crisis, and with profound secrecy too, excited her warmest indignation against all that host of circuitous precautions which courtiers dignify by the name of policy. Now, as the principles of natural justice require that the punishment of the offender should immediately follow the detection of his offence, Lady Caroline determined to convince.

vince her father that he had no right to impede her natural liberty ; but that she would choose her own society, and act without the smallest regard to his controul, and in open defiance of his stratagems.

In executing this scheme, prudence never interposed to suggest that it was possible that the means to which she had recourse to torment her father might *eventually* embarrass herself ; nor did candour hint the possibility that Lord Glanville might not be the cause of Sir John Randolph's inhospitality, as the worthy baronet, previous to the earl's call had shewn symptoms of being weary of a guest whom he had invited for a few days, but whose arrival was followed by two formidable portmanteaus, and an immense travelling trunk, enough to intimidate any one who was not disposed to give up his house to a six months' residence. I believe that candour and prudence are among the virtues received
into

into the new school ; but on the present occasion, having nothing better than expedience to suggest, it was impossible for them to restrain the uproar of the passions ; which being kept in no sort of controul by the suggestions of duty, candour determined that a father was very fair game, and that it was lawful to hunt him down ; and prudence saw no reason why a person might not stop short on the edge of a precipice, as soon as there was no reason for proceeding further.

Lady Caroline's answer to Mr. Raymond expressed a pointed censure of Lord Glanville's behaviour ; and, after waving all pretensions to the character of Minerva, which was at least *modest*, she expressed such satisfaction in Mr. Raymond's society, as was indeed not quite consistent with the attributes of that goddess. She denied having any right to direct that gentleman's conduct,

yet declared herself pleased with the deference that he paid to her judgment; and, by expressing an anxiety for his welfare, she opened the door to a clandestine correspondence, and laid the foundation of future misery.

After she had finished her letter, it occurred to Lady Caroline that it was replete with sprightly turns and elegant allusions, which deserved commendation; and, as she very much wished to impress Sophia with an idea of her exalted talents, she was inclined to show it, and demand her plaudits. She had almost reached the dressing-room with this design, when she recollected that Sophia was a very odd girl, had seen little of life, and might probably be so scrupulous as to object to a private intercourse with an elegant, interesting young man. Mr. Raymond's situation next presented itself to her recollection, and she

she felt a deeper scarlet tinge her cheek when she reflected, that the only answer she could give to any inquiries after what he was, would be, that he was a person of dependent, or rather desperate fortune. She now considered the Italian princes, German counts, and French marquises, whom she had successively rejected; and she feared that the advantages which Mr. Raymond possessed over those slighted swains, if seriously investigated, must be reduced to this one proposition, that Lord Glanville never had expressed such a *decided dislike* on any former occasion.

Conscious that Sophia's principles and motives of action were not only extraordinary but deeply rooted, and unwilling to forfeit her approbation, Lady Caroline spared her new friend the distress of improper confidence, and dispatched her billet to Raymond through the inter-

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vention of Mrs. Chenille, who being an adept in her profession, did not fail to take advantage of a wet wafer to make herself perfectly mistress of its contents; which with punctual exactness she committed to paper to use as occasion might serve, either as the coadjutrix of her lady, or of Lord Glanville.

Affairs were exactly in this state at the castle, when Lady FitzJohn, smitten by that irresistible passion for the *extraordinary* which now unsettles so many female heads, determined to give a fête. Her motives for this magnificent undertaking were not singular. Sir Peter had assured her that he must be announced in the gazette in a few months; and, as butchers and bakers have sometimes a very keen scent upon such occasions, it would be proper to convince *them*, and indeed the whole vicinity of W——, that the FitzJohns were any thing rather than bankrupts; and as to the expence
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of the business, it was intended to be conducted on the smart, rather than on the substantial scale, displaying great taste, extensive erudition, and elegant œconomy.

There was beside another reason: Lord Glanville seemed to want a little stimulation; and there could be no harm in shewing him, that the fair Melisandriana had very numerous and genteel connections. His fallow complexion and profound dejection certainly proved him to be absolutely “over boots in love;” but on the verge of seventy no time is to be lost. The irresolution and imbecility of age may blunt the blind archer’s darts; and it is prudent to call in the accelerating aid of jealousy, lest, as has sometimes happened, Death should step in and dispute with Hymen for the antiquated victim. Lady Fitz-John had the happy prospect of
being

being able to show something like a rival; for Mr. Artremidorus had engaged Sir Brouze Harpy to spend a week at Fitz John Place, in their return from Brighton; and though beauty, even when magnified by an opera-glass, never darted one ray sufficiently bright to penetrate the cloudy meridian of Sir Brouze's understanding, he was in fashion, dressed in the best style of slovenliness, and certainly did *look* like a divine engaging fellow.

Being sometimes vain enough to hope that my lucubrations may survive the manners I describe, I think it necessary to state, for the information of the next generation, that at the opening of the nineteenth century, a *divine engaging fellow* meant a kind of compound of the monkey and the bear: by uniting the grimaces and mischievousness of the former, with the torpid insensibility and
churlish

churlish selfishness of the latter, you might (provided you could boast a natural stock of impudence) produce a *dear agreeable creature*: that is, a something who cared for nobody, and was good for nothing; who could stare modesty out of countenance, affront sensibility, outrage politeness, and do the rudest things with the most unembarrassed air. Sir Brouze, it is true, was very apt to get tipsy; but, if he could only be kept sober, Lady FitzJohn considered that he would be a great ornament to her fête, and effectually alarm the earl; especially if Melisandriana would but allow him to rally her on her likeness to his favourite pointer, listen to his anecdotes of the turf, and perform Diana to his Acteon, by whispering or romping with him in an easy stylish way.

Very splendid preparations were made at FitzJohn-Place for this gala; and
 innumerable

innumerable were the contrivances by which ignorance and vanity sought to cover their bald pretensions to taste and elegance. The presiding genius, being determined that it should be quite *ton*, requested Mr. Pliant to furbish up all his classical learning, and give every thing a *Greek* air. At his suggestion, she issued her invitation for an *Elysian petit soupé*; and her garden, consisting of a rood and a half of ground, was fixed upon for the scene of the first act. A Chinese summer-house was new-named the palace of Pluto; and even the duck-pond underwent a transformation, for it was called Lethe, and furnished with a boat, which so far resembled Charon's that it only admitted one passenger at a time. Pliant himself was to officiate as ferryman, dressed in a fur-cap and a waterman's jacket; and Mr. Congée, the dancing-master, volunteered his services; observing, that if he
and

and his attendant-scraper stood on the opposite bank, in an *ilegant pessition*, playing upon their kits, they might be misunderstood for *Orphas* and *Amphon*, Sir Peter intreated that he might be excused from making his appearance; he urged that he had no spirits, and knew not how to support *any* character with propriety. His lady was peremptory in her commands, and he had no other alternative than to *abscond*; which step, in the present situation of his affairs, he rightly judged would give rather too much *celebrity* to his entertainment.

I question whether Democritus ever laughed more vehemently than did Lady Caroline when the Fitz-John invitation arrived at Castle Glanville. The decoration of the card first attracted her satiric wit; and, though it was meant for the head of Cerberus, she persisted in calling it her dear friend's profile with the wig off. An Elysian supper, given in a
small

small garden, in a country market town, was indeed a new wonder in the regions of *high-life* ; and Lady Caroline vowed that nothing but physical incapacity should deter her from enjoying all its extravagance.

In the midst of her hilarity Mr. Brudenell had the courage to observe, that it was possible the mixture of company might be disagreeable not only to Lady Caroline, but to Lord Glanville. This hint, though really urged in support of the declining influence of paternal authority, only suggested to this lively genius the possibility of making the earl add to the ridiculousness of the scene. Aware of Lady FitzJohn's views, she resolved that the hero of the night should not be absent, and she took care at dinner to communicate the intelligence that all the corporation of W——— would certainly be present. She added, that
they

they were violently displeased with their present member for giving bad dinners ; and then, apparently changing the topic, observed that a speedy dissolution of parliament was very much talked of. Lord Glanville was soon roused from his reverie ; and, deaf to his daughter's suggestions, that crowded rooms and late hours were very unwholesome, he resolved to favour Lady Fitz-John with his company. Mr. Brudenell had no cynical abhorrence of innocent amusement, and Sophia readily yielded to the impulse of youth, which prompts a spontaneous and sincere welcome of festive pleasures.

It may be expected, that the article of dress engaged the attention of the ladies ; and while Sophia was projecting a little ball-room finery, that would be at once tastefully elegant, and simply neat, Lady Caroline's whimsical love of frolic directed her to her father's black velvet

velvet cap, which, she observed, if bound on with a cambric handkerchief, and decorated with a bunch of Michaelmas daisies, would become the prolific parent of all the head-dresses in W——, till superseded by something more fantastical. Sophia's remonstrance against affected singularity only induced Lady Caroline to contrive whether the earl's robe-de-chambre could not be likewise pressed into the service; and the timid Sophia now trembled at the idea of making her first debüt in a new neighbourhood with such a capricious companion. But her fears were relieved by one of those sudden transitions to which Lady Caroline's resolves were always subject. Her ladyship appeared in the evening in all the paraphernalia of a woman of fashion, and with an air expressive at once of her exalted rank, and of her resolution to support the decorum it required.

Sophia

Sophia had no time to ask the cause of this revolution, nor of the equally remarkable change that appeared in the manners, as well as the externals of her companion, whose gravity almost amounted to dejection. Not one lively fall escaped her, till the coach stopped at Sir Peter's; and she suffered Mr. Brudenell to lead her through the decorations, without the least change of countenance. But as galas, balls, and masquerades, have a positive right to some strong mark of honorary distinction, I will dedicate an entire chapter to the wonders that immortalized Lady Fitz-John's entertainment.

CHAP. XV.

*The dear Gala described, with a few
Anecdotes of the Company.*

THE effect of the whole *coup d'oeil*, on entering Lady FitzJohn's territories, was indeed striking. A transparent painting being over the garden gate, intended to represent the Cumean Sybill; but, owing to some mistake of the painter, and the negligence of the carpenter, added to the evening proving very stormy, the prophetic virgin was universally mistaken for Mother Shipton, and the introductory kick with which she saluted the company, was considered as a designed repetition of the practical

joke, that has for so many years appalled all the bumpkins who visit Mrs. Salmon's royal wax-work. As to elysium itself, it wore but a comfortless appearance. The garden was naturally barren of shade, and the boughs of horse-chestnut, that had been stuck into the prim parterres for the occasion, presented only shrivelled leaves, mournfully drooping, though perhaps not improper for the haunt of spectres. Most of the variegated lamps were extinguished by the wind, which had also blown off the flowery wigs with which her ladyship had decorated the bald pates of three leaden statues, that stood pointing to the summer-house. In their original state they were intended for Pan, Neptune, and Sir Richard Whittington. This last hero, who, as may be supposed, owed his elevation solely to Sir Peter's *bad taste*, was voted too unlike a Greek
for

for this exhibition ; for what could be done with the magisterial robe, the roll of parchment, and above all with the celebrated cat, who with due regard to costume was stationed at her master's feet. Invention, however, was Lady FitzJohn's forte ; and she soon contrived an oiled paper-furtout that covered the Lord Mayor's drapery ; she lengthened the parchment roll into a tolerably sized club ; and, by drawing a calf's-skin over Pufs,* converted her into a good Nemean lion, as she had done her master into a terrible Hercules. I must own, however, that as the new-made deity had no Ciceroni to announce his apotheosis, mistakes occurred in a mixt assembly, who were not all composed of literati ; and the son of Jove was sometimes called one of the Furies, and sometimes denominated a new monster of Lady FitzJohn's own making,

though far the greater part called him the bear and ragged staff.

After some brief observations on these wonders, the company drew near the “silent waters;” but, though Charon was very alert with his boat, and the tuneful pair very harmonious with their fiddles, no one chose to be ferried over the mud. An universal shiver seized the company, and, deaf to the voice of melody, they crowded into Pluto’s palace, the size of which was rather calculated for an assemblage of their aërial shadows, than a mob of corporeal forms. The numerous guests, knowing that they must seem pleased, even while they felt heartily weary, pressed their elbows to their sides, and stood as firmly wedged as the famous Macedonian phalanx. Those who had the best lungs contrived to shout out their acknowledgments to Lady FitzJohn for the pleasure they

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enjoyed; while the rest whispered some sarcastic observations, by way of relieving their own spleen to the unfortunate beings who were *pinioned* near them.

But scarcely could the voice of compliment subdue the chagrin of poor Lady FitzJohn. Circumstances more vexatious than the extinguished lamps, the withered trees, the bald statues or the kicking Sybill, had happened; for Mr. Artremidorus and his friend had returned from Brighton that very morning, exceedingly out of humour with their speculations there, and determined to spoil every entertainment. Having stalked about the ball-room in boots till they had rubbed all the coloured chalks off the floor, knocked down the wreaths of flowers with their canes, and fractured the stage on which Orpheus and Amphion, when no longer demi-gods, were to accompany the pipe and tambourine in the humble capacity of fiddlers;

fiddlers ; they voted that the thing never would do, and advised her ladyship by all means to dispatch exprests and prevent people from coming. They then retired to the supper-room, devoured the best eatables, and pelted one another with pastry till they were tired. After these fatiguing exertions they drowned their cares in bumpers of Burgundy, and dropped asleep.

Though this behaviour was certainly the *very thing*, and might, if the visitors had been limited to the grandees of W——, have passed off as a good frolic intended to show them life, Lady FitzJohn feared that Lord Glanville's politeness had so much of the old school in it, that he would think the young bucks showed more ease and freedom in the above adventure, than was consistent with due respect for a peer of the realm, who had engaged to honour a mere country tradesman with his presence.

fence. Abandoning every hope of playing off her guest as a new suitor to her beauteous daughter, all her sollicitude was engaged by schemes to conceal the Bacchanals ; and Melisandriana herself, instead of receiving the company in state, like another Proserpine, tucked up her flowing drapery, and assisted in rallying the festoons of flowers, and marshalling the surviving jellies and syllabubs into some tolerable order. The head-clerk who was to officiate as groom of the chambers, with the name of Rhadamanthus, was in the mean time as anxiously employed in endeavouring to clear the supper-room of dead men ; but before he could succeed the first carriage drove into the yard, and the lighted flambeaus announced the Randolph livery. The anxious house maid now rushed in, exclaiming, “ Oh, Mr. Scribble, Mr. Rhodomontade I mean, the *capitable* gentry are all come, and you must

must go down and lead them in directly."

Rhadamanthus, who, in strict compliance with his character of a just judge, had not only doomed the inebriate pair to the cell of oblivion, but had actually supported Artremidorus to his bed-chamber, and was now trying his skill on the other criminal lying senseless on the floor, could only hastily consign Sir Bronze to the care of Betty, and, assuming the verger's gown, and apothecary's wig, advance with a magisterial air to meet the company, or I should rather say to introduce choice spirits to the delights of Elysium. Betty now exerted all *her* powers to waken Sir Bronze, and persuade him to walk off quietly; but, wearied with repeated excuses of "all in good time," and "I'll be gone presently," she resolved to have recourse to the same expedients which Falstaff practised on the lifeless

Hotspur. She had dragged her luggage as far as the door, when the sound of some strange voices on the stairs, alarmed her with the apprehension that all the *capitable* gentry were rushing it; and, knowing she must at any rate clear the stage, she fairly crammed the unresisting Sir Bronze into the china-closet; and, with an observation, that he might get sober there for any thing he was good for, she locked the door, and left him to finish his slumbers.

“Single disappointments,” says the old jest book, “never come alone.” The festal scene suffered another deprivation by the absence of Sir Peter, who, after having with great reluctance submitted to be dressed in a stuffed coat and brutus wig for the occasion, but half an hour before his doors were thrown open, received a packet of letters that required immediate attention. Neither Rhadamanthus nor Charon could possibly

possibly be spared to assist him ; and my lady, after raving against the narrow illiberal spirit of mercantile concerns, declared, that as he was *nobody* he would not be much missed, and that he and his ledgers might pack off together. But where to find a quiet retreat was the next difficulty. The counting-house was appropriated to the reception of the gentlemen's gentlemen ; the laundry was assigned to the drivers ; the scullery was turned into a refectory, and even the barn, cow-house, and pigsty, had been fitted up for the accommodation of her friends' retinue ; being determined that every one should say she did things handsomely. No place was left vacant but the ice-house ; and that being now emptied to supply the evening regale, Sir Peter determined to wrap himself up, and establish his head quarters in a spot which at least promised quiet and security. Not such quiet as he once en-

joyed in the halcyon days of “blessed singleness;” but, with the comparative comforts of his pipe, his Welch-rabbit, and his pen and ink, remote from all the noise and nonsense of the evening.

While these arrangements passed in the family “the most kind hostess” did not feel sufficiently at ease to say many good things to her guests in the garden, or to relish the many good things that were said to her. Mr. Raymond had been so polite as to tell her that her Elysium so far exceeded all his fancy had dared to paint, that he never wished to see another. Lady Caroline protested, that it united all the principal attributes which poets assigned to those dolorous regions; being dark, cold, comfortless, beset with hideous forms, and very apt to inspire melancholy thoughts. Even Lord Glanville, while he made his bow, so far slid into equivoque, as to declare, that he never should forget
that

that evening's entertainment. Lady FitzJohn had nothing to do but to smile, curtesy, observe that her friends were *too* obliging, and herself the happiest creature in the world. At last, the fair Melifandriania appeared with a decanter in one hand and a rummer in the other, to shew that she was Hebe; and announced, what was indeed joyful tidings to the inhabitants of the shades, namely, that for their good behaviour they were all to be admitted into Olympus.

Very little ceremony was necessary to transport the party to the upper regions. The ball and card-rooms were filled in an instant. The company still crowded together, shrugged their shoulders, and with one consent began to talk of rheums, catarrhs, and hectics; execrating the absurdity of *al fresco* entertainments in this damp, uncertain climate. It being suggested, that immediate exercise was one of the most wholesome expedients that

could be resorted to after having run any danger of taking cold, Lord Glanville declined cutting into the whist-table, and asked Lady FitzJohn if she would do him the honour to open the ball with him, by dancing a minuet. Her ladyship rather unopportunately remarked, that she had given up dancing for some years, but proposed her daughter as a substitute. There was no receding; the unreluctant fair, "nothing loath to hear his lordship's pleaded reason," already advanced, and fixed herself in the proper attitude; the music played, the company arranged themselves, and the earl, with lovely Hebe by his side, found himself in a most conspicuous and awkward situation.

Let me here pause, and inform my young readers, that, whatever they may think of it, there is sure to be something uncommonly graceful in an earl's dancing, especially when he exhibits at a
country

country assembly. His bows indeed were rather stiff, his attitudes had more analogy to angles than curves, and his weighty solemn movements were a perfect contrast to the airy graces of his youthful partner, who looked and moved the conscious countess. But what were those faults? Every body knew that he had not learnt yesterday; and, for aught they could say, his lordship might have been the finest dancer of his own standing. I am assured that the good breeding of the company would not have been violated by any further indication of mirth than a stolen simper, or whisper behind a fan, if a lamentable catastrophe had not happened. At the very moment that the earl was advancing with extended arms to terminate the exhibition, just at the very instant when Lady FitzJohn, forgetting all her previous disasters, nodded a most significant "This must do," the potent voice of

music, which once vanquished Alexander, suddenly ceased, and a horrible crash ensued. In short, the orchestra, which had been but slightly put together at first, weakened by the assaults of the two Bacchanals in the morning, suddenly broke down, and Orpheus and Amphion, together with the vulgar herd, kits and fiddles, pipes and tabors, rolled helter skelter on the floor.

A pause ensued, “a pause of solemn awe.” It was at first supposed, that the ceiling had given way, and that the whole party were half way on their journey to the wine-vaults; but, as the demigods rose one after another, exclaiming, like Apollo in Midas, “Not a bone broken,” the company soon took courage, and examined into the consequences of this disaster; which, after a minute investigation, were reduced to, *Imprimis*, a broken fiddle; *2dly*, a fractured fiddle-stick; *3dly*, the complete
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destruction

destruction of the tambourine; which, either from mischance or envy at superior harmony, encountered the head of Orpheus in falling, and, being composed of more penetrable stuff, yielded in the conflict, and encircled the neck of the triumphant bard, somewhat like the collar of a military order. Lastly, and what was certainly the most to be lamented, the delicate nerves of the too susceptible Melisandriana received such a shock, that she immediately fell into hysterics. Now, though these hysterics were as becoming as possible, Lord Glanville did not recollect that it was his duty to support the lady, and apply the smelling bottle; he coolly resigned her to the care of Miss La Rouge, and without expressing any sympathy for Lady FitzJohn's affliction at her daughter's exquisite sensibility, joined the merry circle who were laughing at the consequences of the late disaster. Con-
scious

scious that his own exploits had bordered on the ridiculous, he thought it politic to adopt the same unbecoming expression of vulgar mirth; but soon, resuming his wonted circumspection, he listened to hear whether his daughter's voice did not predominate in the clamorous merriment. Astonished at its not being distinguishable, he felicitated himself that he had at last prevailed on her to observe decorum and etiquette; when, looking round to see how she was occupied, he was alarmed at discovering that she was not in the room. Thought speedily crowded upon thought; he recollected that, among the gliding shades whom he had recognized in "the palpable obscure" of Pluto's palace, he had caught a glimpse of Raymond's figure; and as he also was absent, a certain association took place in the earl's mind which expressed mere antiquated aristocracy than modern greatness of soul.

foul. Cold as the night air *now* was, and much as he shuddered at the idea of increasing his latent fever, he was again hastening to explore the garden, when his fears were instantly relieved, or I should rather say diverted into another channel, by the appearance of his daughter, in the full heyday of vivacity, and exclaiming “you are the only partner I will dance with to night.” The reluctant prisoner whom she dragged after her looked like hoary Hyem chained to the car of May, and was not immediately discovered to be Sir Peter himself, accoutered in a white flannel night-cap, drawn over his black wig, and his gala coat half concealed by a red roquelaure. Why Lady Caroline happened to be left in the garden, and how she came to storm Sir Peter’s “tower of frost,” must be told another time; suffice it now to say, that the pleading captive endeavoured to evade the

the decrees of his conqueror without success ; not even a change of dress was allowed ; and Lady FitzJohn, who had just invented a very good tale to excuse her husband's absence, after such a discovery, had nothing to do but to declare that his odd humours wanted rubbing off, and that Lady Caroline's wit was irresistible. The music recommenced as well as the deranged state of the orchestra would permit, and Sir Peter's country dancing soon obliterated all recollection of Lord Glanville's minuet. After having amused the company till the jest grew tiresome, his capricious partner released him from his engagement, and, declining dancing any longer herself, retired to a corner of the room, rather teased than flattered by the adulation that surrounded her, and a prey to that fretful inquietude which always denotes a mind dissatisfied with itself.

Sophia's

Sophia's adventures at this ball must all be reserved for *future* explanation. Her figure was less calculated to attract attention than Lady Caroline's, and she had a vast deal of that exploded manner which our divine Milton ascribes to Eve in her state of innocence, "Not obvious, not obtrusive; but retired, the more desirable." But, though I cannot charge her with saying one word or assuming one posture during the whole evening for the sake of being looked at, a new star can never appear in the horizon of a country ball-room without exciting eager curiosity to know in what constellation it should be classed. To "Who is she?" it was answered, "The grand-daughter of the old clergyman who accompanies her," and it was also thought a relation of Lord Glanville's. To "Is she a person of fortune?" there were two replies; one stated, that it was reported Lord Glanville would give her something

something handsome ; and others protested that she was nothing more than an humble cousin whom Lady Caroline had chosen for her companion. Sophia's claims to beauty and elegance fluctuated as those opinions respectively lost or gained ground for some time ; but the uniform charms of artless sweetness and obliging affability at last obtained their due ascendancy ; and, though Lady Caroline behaved in the most *stylish* manner the whole evening, all that portion of the good-natured world which Lady FitzJohn had assembled round her, pitied the amiable young creature, who must certainly suffer a vast deal from Lady Caroline's *uncertain* humours.

General admiration, however, is not the species of homage to which most young ladies aspire ; and all my fair readers, who have been duly prepared by the labours of my predecessors to unite the ideas of a dance and a lover, are,

are, doubtless, indignant at the spleen of gray virginity, which must have prompted me not only to deviate from all precedent, but even to lock up the only two beaux who had any chance of making tolerable lovers. It will be but a small extenuation of my fault, if I should observe, that these gentlemen belong to an order of beings who glory in their apathy, and, after piquing themselves upon affronting every woman of character they meet, generally terminate their career of gallantry, either by taking an antiquated courtesan into keeping, or else by preferring some handsome housemaid who has had low cunning enough to entrap them into an illicit connexion, and to make them suffer all the miseries of abject subjection and ruinous expence, while they sooth their galled spirit, with fanciful ideas of freedom. I know that I ought to have given my heroines such charms as would even
have

have penetrated the frigid zone of modern puppyism ; and I can no otherways make my peace than by hinting, that I have a lover in reserve to introduce at the proper season.

We will now return to the company, and seat them in proper order round the supper tables. Good eating is confessedly congenial with John Bull's constitution ; and all preceding embarrassments and disappointments were absorbed in the hope that this part of the entertainment would go off with eclat. But Lady FitzJohn, being persuaded that ball-suppers are only designed to be looked at, and having observed that nobody at Glanville castle ate more than a sandwich and five dried cherries, originally calculated her eatables by this rule, and depended chiefly on painted pâtés, and baskets of flowers to assist her plateau in covering her table. It cannot be forgotten, that the two di-
vine

vine engaging fellows had made irreparable devastation among the *digestible* ornaments ; and, though the appearance of the supper-table still presented a gay profusion to the eye, and extorted exclamations from the ladies of “ How very pretty ! ” “ How excessively smart ! ” the grosser taste of the gentlemen discovered itself in *mournfully* inquiring of the fair partners, “ Whether there really was any thing that they could help them to ? ”

The civil compliments which this *beautiful* repast extorted from every *beholder* somewhat relieved Lady Fitz-John’s chagrin at her many mortifications. She forgot that her daughter, to whom this festival was to have proved a prelude to an Hymeneal triumph, had sat neglected ever since the hysteric scene, being avoided by the beaux, who declared themselves afraid of agitating such extreme sensibility, and laughed at
by

by the belles for having played off an unsuccessful artifice. Happy at gleaning up a little scattered importance, Lady FitzJohn began to describe what her regale would have been, if she had not been disappointed in various particulars. She dwelt upon the hard fate of a hamper of most exquisite viands, which had been rolled in the dirt by the overturn of the London *flying waggon*; and spoke of the calamitous end of the pines and peaches, that sunk to the bottom of the canal, through the carelessness of the bargemen. Every body good naturedly recollected similar disasters that had happened to themselves; at least, every body *could* recollect the ingenious excuses by which meagre entertainments had been *cheaply* gilded over, by spoiling baskets of fish that had never been caught, and misdirecting haunches of venison belonging to deer who were alive and merry at that instant. Perceiving

ceiving that etiquette required another half hour to be spent in eating, or to speak more accurately, in moving the jaws, as Schacabac did in the Arabian tales, while he seemed to devour the Barmecide's imaginary lamb and lozenges ; her ladyship proceeded to give an account of the terrible accident that had prevented her son and his friend from being present at this festivity. "They were imprudently driving against time," said she, "being so very anxious to meet this most agreeable company ; when, going down a steep hill, both the horses fell ; over went the curricule ; out went the gentlemen, so dreadfully bruised by the fall, that ——" A loud yawn from the china closet interrupted her narrative ; an universal alarm, and as universal an inquiry of, "Did you hear that noise?" succeeded. I am not sure that a few of the ladies might not apprehend that a supernatural visitor

would instantly appear; and as Lady FitzJohn dealt in wonders, it was possible that she might have Sir Walter and King Ragodrum Logdum both in the closet. I doubt whether the appearance of these renowned warriors could have given Lady FitzJohn a greater shock than she received on hearing Sir Bronze, whom she supposed in bed in the attics, with a volley of oaths demand to be let out, and swear that they had shut him in a bandbox. Some of the ladies screamed, others fainted, the more prudent waited to see how Lady Caroline behaved before they sported any *becoming* extravagancies. The gentlemen crowded to the part of the room from whence the noise issued, and forming themselves into a circle, as you always should do when you argue with a ghost, they demanded of the invisible spectre its reasons for “making night hideous.” “Let me out” was the only answer; but, as these
words

words were accompanied by three obstreperous kicks at the closet door, it was sagaciously observed, that this boisterous behaviour did not accord with the usual manners of a gliding spectre. An unlucky wit remarked that the thief who stole the supper had fallen asleep in that closet, and forgot to run away. The clamour increased every moment, and with it the cries of the ladies to keep him in till they were gone.

A pause of astonishment speedily succeeded to this wild uproar. The lock yielded to the violent efforts of the prisoner, and forth stepped, neither felon nor goblin, but the gay Sir Bronze; who, with the easy nonchalance of fine breeding, slightly bowed, apologized for his mistake, hoped he had not disturbed the company, and, walking to the upper end of the room, adjusted his cravat in the pier-glass. With very enviable ef-

frontery he lamented that any body should think him of sufficient consequence to suspend the amusement on his account ; and, after an inquiry of “ What shall we do now ? I am ready for any thing ; ” he looked round to observe the smile of general admiration. But in this respect Sir Bronze’s triumphs were incomplete ; for, though a few of the W—— Narcissuses devoured the glorious extravagance with looks that seemed to say, “ I’ll play it off the first opportunity,” the aristocratic party behaved with that cool contempt which must have convinced a less impenetrable coxcomb that he had over-shot the mark of *ease*. The gay freedom of Lady Caroline’s manner was chilled by avowed hauteur when he attempted to talk to her ; and, contrary to his own idolized laws of good breeding, Lord Glanville interrupted the baronet’s account of the most celebrated

demireps of Brighton, by condescending to explain to the company the mal-administration and deplorable aspect of public affairs. In strict conformity to the established rule of never listening to a *great* man when a *greater* is talking, Sir Bronze saw his auditors gradually file off, and himself doomed to contribute to the general amusement, either in the capacity of an humble dancer or quiet card-player. He chose the latter, and ingeniously contrived to give a little impetus to his own feelings, and to relieve himself from the mortification of perceiving that he was of as little importance as when asleep in the china closet, by the happy device of high betting. At a late hour the party broke up. The plebeians enchanted with the entertainment, delighted with the Glanville ladies, and in raptures with my lord; who, though such a very great man, talked to Mr. Mayor with great

affability for half an hour, played at whist with his lady, and shook hands with *all* the aldermen. Sir Bronze, on the other hand, was voted to be *nobody*, and all the young ladies rejoiced that the odious Artremidorus was not present.

Thus ended the gala ; and let me here apprise those of my young readers to whom balls and lovers are still unknown, that these grand desiderata are not a sovereign specific against *disasters*. Like the cap of Fortunatus, and the ring of Gyges, they are often the parents of perplexities ; and young Hope has more cause to complain of disappointment than satiety. Most fêtes, like Lady FitzJohn's, are a mixed scene, productive of alternate amusement and chagrin both to the entertainer and the entertained ; and I can describe no spell more likely to ensure the former, and abate the latter, than that the host
should

should not aim at something *transcendantly fine*, and that the guests should never wish to be thought *fastidiously elegant*.

CHAP. XVI.

*Illiberal Prejudices proved to be consistent
with liberal Conduct.*

SOPHIA met Mr. Brudenell, in the library at Glanville castle, before the earl and Lady Caroline had left their apartments. After a good-humoured laugh at disappointed vanity, which the Fitz-Johns richly deserved, Mr. Brudenell turned the discourse to more interesting subjects. Though no one had more liberally contributed to the real pleasure of the scene than himself, or had seemed more agreeably observant of the claims that society forms upon real politeness, his anxious eye had still been fixed
where

where his heart most fondly doated; and he saw that Sophia was an object, not only of general attention, but also of approbation.

Beside this, he made a still more pleasant discovery. A more particular sentiment seemed to agitate the bosom of a young officer, whom Sir John Randolph announced by the name of Lord Viscount Selborne. He had sought an early opportunity to be introduced to the Glanville party; engaged Sophia for the first two dances; and when etiquette compelled him to resign her, he always took care to secure her hand at the next change of partners. At supper he placed himself at her side; and the various events of the evening seemed no otherwise to interest *him*, than as they gave him opportunities of studying her truly amiable character. Mr. Brudenell particularly observed, that when Sir

Bronze accosted his charge with an air of insolent freedom, and she silenced his effrontery by a civil curtesy, a reserved look, and a cold monosyllable, Lord Selborne was so far overpowered by his feelings, as to exclaim “Admirable!”—“How, madam,” said he, while her face glowed at the appropriate compliment, “must your admirers shew their devotion? *You* will never want a protector.”

It was on the subject of Lord Selborne that Mr. Brudenell wished to catechize his grand-daughter; but, as all my female readers will agree that the answers to such an examination must be very difficult, they will not wonder that she found her sleeves ill adjusted, and was in a considerable hurry for her breakfast. But when, from questioning her respecting her opinion of Lord Selborne, Mr. Brudenell changed the subject into an inquiry

inquiry of what he had talked about, Sophia recovered her powers of utterance; and she soon proved, that his remarks corresponded with the promise that his countenance gave of agreeableness and intelligence.

“ You have examined me pretty closely,” said Sophia with a smile: “ Now, dear Sir, it is my turn to interrogate you. Pray how came Lady Caroline, Mr. Raymond, and you, to be out of the room when the orchestra tumbled? and what was the reason of her uncommon gravity the whole evening? She positively declined dancing after her frisk with Sir Peter, fixed herself in a musing posture, and intimidated the beaux as much by her solemnity, as Miss FitzJohn had disgusted them by her affectation.”

“ I never take upon me to account for a fine lady’s eccentricities,” replied Mr. Brudenell. “ Most probably, Lady

Caroline got up yesterday morning with a resolution to be *whimsical*."

"Dear Sir, this is not fair. You affect to know nothing, when I am sure you might relieve my curiosity,"

"I have often told you," replied Mr. Brudenell, "that curiosity is the bane of your sex; and I will use this opportunity of giving you a practical lecture on the art of subduing it."

"Ah!" said Sophia, "even my grandpapa is not quite free from masculine prejudices. Even he cannot help treating us poor women like subordinate creatures. What in a man is laudable inquiry, is mere inquisitiveness in us. Here have I been owning all my secrets, while he, dumb and reserved,——"

"Hold, Sophy," interrupted Mr. Brudenell. "Have you really told me *all* your secrets? Solicitude for your happiness justifies my concern; but, as I do not see how you are interested in
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an explanation of Lady Caroline's conduct, I will be as dumb and reserved as you *try* to be."

"I have nothing to confess," replied Sophia.

"Except," said Mr. Brudenell archly, "that you were almost as well pleased with Lord Selborne as he seemed to be with you. That blush develops the mystery, and now, indeed, my Sophy has nothing to confess."

"Provoking indeed!" returned the young lady. "Why, dear grandpapa, you do take up such very odd notions. What does it signify what I think of Lord Selborne?"

Mr. Brudenell now in his turn began to stir the fire, and express some anxiety for Lady Caroline's appearance.

Sophia repeated the question.—"I will no longer sport with a reserve which is indeed not only a con-

stituent but also an *amiable* part of the female character," returned Mr. Brudenell. "But, as frankness becomes *me*, I will tell you that you were the motive that drew Lord Selborne to the ball last night; and as, to judge from his behaviour, he does not think that your manner belies your fair fame, you may soon expect him to declare himself your admirer."

Sophia started: a tenfold degree of animation lighted up her countenance, while she exclaimed, "Indeed! surely that would be very precipitate."

"I think it would," observed Mr. Brudenell; "but suffer me to proceed. Do you recollect your old friend Sir William Evans at Bath? he to whom you were so attentive, that the lady gossips of the place accused you of a matrimonial design on the gouty bachelor?"

"He

“ He was so very agreeable, that there might be some truth in the report,” replied Sophia smiling.

“ Well, my dear, he only wishes to *transfer* your affections to a more suitable object. Lord Selborne is Sir William’s nephew and heir. His character stands high in the estimation of sensible people. He is said to have passed through the ordeal of a military life with high respectability. He is termed a polite scholar. I am partial to politeness, and I venerate a scholar. You may gather my sentiments of him from what I have said ; but there are two other parties to be consulted, Lord Glanville and your own heart. You will cease to wonder at my wishing to discover the first impressions that his behaviour has made upon you ; and I want also to guard you against the surprise of a hasty declaration. I trust
you

you will have many other opportunities of considering his conduct, before you are called upon for a positive decision : for *general* estimation is too indefinite ground to be a fit foundation for *particular* regard. Very worthy people may be rendered unhappy in so intimate a connexion as that of marriage, merely by having dissimilar tastes, or adverse habits.

“ As to Lord Glanville, I have not apprized Selborne of your dependence upon that nobleman ; but the more I see of his character, the more do I wish you safe in the protection of some worthy man, who may support you under those trials to which the earl’s singularities may expose you.”

“ Shall I not have your support ? ” inquired Sophia eagerly.

“ You will have more *permanent* support than mine,” returned Mr. Brudenell

nell with pious energy; “approving conscience, and the ever-present Deity. My clerical functions will soon call me from you; but you are not unacquainted with the duty of communing with your own heart. When your own strength fails, look up, my child, with holy confidence, and expect the assisting grace that will not be refused to humble integrity. You will be surrounded by artifice; but rest assured, “they that walk uprightly walk securely.”

“And now, Sophy, to return to Lord Selborne. Sir William Evans has requested me to plead his nephew’s cause; but I no farther wish him yours, than as I conceive such an event may promote your mutual happiness. I forbore to prepare you for meeting him at Lady FitzJohn’s, for I wished you to appear in your natural character, which a consciousness of his intentions might have obscured. I would premise, that

Lord

Lord Glanville may probably start objections. It is impossible to say how a man will act who would only perform an act of natural justice from compulsory motives. But, should you encounter opposition and cruelty, remember that where you cannot act as you would Providence calls upon you to exercise the *passive* virtues ; and it should seem that the occasions for these qualities are most numerous, or that the practice of them is most difficult, since Christianity distinguishes them by her highest promises."

Lady Caroline's entrance prevented Mr. Brudenell from proceeding. She seemed so far to have conquered her chagrin as to be able to reassume her accustomed vivacity ; but her pallid cheek and unquiet eye were unequivocal symptoms of a disordered mind. Indeed, this lady's present situation was
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by no means such as to encourage the imitation of those who conceive themselves entitled to act with lofty disregard to the opinions and sentiments of others. At the commencement of her clandestine correspondence with Raymond, she felt no stronger motive than a determination to shew the earl of Glanville that her sentiments of natural freedom and paternal authority agreed with the liberality of his *precepts*, and not with the narrowness of his conduct. But in the hour in which they first yield to temptation offenders never look at the train of attendant evils. Lady Caroline was reputed to be the richest heiress in England, and was of course too tempting a prize to be readily relinquished by a needy adventurer like Raymond; and though, on discovering that Lord Glanville had not been accessory to the change in Sir John Randolph's behaviour,

viour, she became sincerely desirous to drop the private correspondence, her lover was too firmly attached to permit *her* to retreat. In vain did she endeavour to give her former conduct the colouring of levity and caprice; he would not suffer the beloved of his soul to accuse herself of faults abhorrent to her nature. He, indeed, allowed her to be charming in every humour; but he hinted, as *his* firm persuasion, that her honour would not permit her to dissolve the ties that subsisted between them, that kept him composed under the multiplicity of apprehensions which her superior merit and his own peculiarly difficult situation suggested. Lady Caroline, in her answer to this dolorous epistle, denied a consciousness of the ties that he alluded to; and Raymond, in another letter, declared that what her hand and seal had authenticated, her hand and seal could not invalidate. “ If
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my final doom," said he, "be fixed, if her whom I have believed to be the most exalted and generous of beings be only mutable faithless woman, her own words alone shall convince me of this transformation. O Lady Caroline! if you would indeed avoid that self-reproach which I know you must feel if my ungovernable passion should drive me to an act of desperation, favour me with one minute's privacy at the gala this evening."

It may be observed, that Mr. Raymond did not explain what was this desperate action to which disappointed love might irresistibly impel him. A tender-hearted nymph, whose soft imagination can never reconcile the ideas of life and a despairing lover, would infallibly have conjured up bows, daggers, pistols, and all the horrible apparatus of suicide. Lady Caroline knew the world better, and conjectured that
her

her swain's attack would rather be made upon *her* reputation, than on his own existence. She had been taught to set the highest value upon unspotted fame; and, though her peculiar cast of character did not lead her to pursue the idol admiration in the form of mildness, timidity, deference, prudence, and delicacy; her scorn of the gentler virtues was counterbalanced by a more ardent idolatry of exalted qualities. She could bear to hear it said that Lady Caroline Glanville was rash, precipitate, ungovernable, and capricious, because those faults were not incompatible with beauty, genius, and greatness of soul; but she shrunk from the imputation of folly, and all that weakness which ignorance and susceptibility gild with the name of pure disinterested love. She considered the first match in England not above her ambition, and a husband destitute of rank and fortune as a dreadful degradation.

tion. She had no objection to Raymond's feeling the power of her charms, for she panted for universal empire ; but her soul indignantly revolted at the thought that she had given him any colourable pretence for boasting that he had made an impression on her heart.

In this humour she set out for Fitz-John Place. Fearful that her character would not require the diversity of *affected* folly, she abandoned the scheme of eccentric dress, and determined to awe her presumptuous adorer by the magnificence of her appearance, and to silence his audacious voice by the austerity of her frowns. A glimmering light is equally unfavourable to the display of costly ornaments and indignant glances ; and, though her ladyship had practised a step, a toss, and a swing, as petrifying as the head of Medusa, these graces were inevitably lost in a crowded
 4 cabin,

cabin, where no one could command more space than what they were screwed into by the conflux of company. Unfortunately too, either from design or accident, the bow that Mr. Raymond made Lord Glanville at his entrance was not returned ; and the suggestion that her father certainly intended to have recourse to some unjust coercion, softened her heart in favour of a lover who (especially if compared with the rest of the groupe) had a vast deal of the true gentleman in his address and manner. He said several good things which were received with eclat ; it was evident, or at least Lady Caroline thought so, that if he had chosen to have directed his devoirs to Miss Randolph, they would have been favourably received ; for her advances were too unequivocal to be mistaken. Here then was the ground of Sir John's resentment ; and, though
Lady

Lady Caroline judged too favourably of her own merits to put herself upon a level with a country baronet's daughter, still it could be pleaded, that the existence of a rival removed all charge of *singularity* from her choice, while constancy in his attachments threw some rays of romantic splendor on Raymond's character. Thus pondering, when the company were summoned to leave the temple, she saw him advance without abhorrence, and, at the moment of accepting his hand to lead her to the house, she quite forgot the lightning glance and annihilating frown that was to have banished him for ever. She was so well amused by his dry caustic railery, as to express a wish to see the redoubtable Hercules, and the obstreperous Sybil that had so much diverted all who saw them; and there was so much to laugh at in these oddities, that, somehow
or

or other, Lady Caroline and Mr. Raymond remained in the "myrtle grove," while the rest of the party crowded round the blazing hearths in the higher regions.

I will not minutely detail the conversation that ensued. Lady Caroline continued to protest that she had never made any engagement, till Raymond, in an agony of despair, offered to return all the letters that she had sent him, and rely entirely upon what her honour should decide after their perusal. He then spoke of himself as a *persecuted* man. Lady Caroline caught eagerly at that term; and, after some artful circumlocution, Raymond hesitatingly owned, that Lord Glanville's aversion to him proceeded to such ungentleman-like lengths, that he had procured him to be discharged from three manors, and left out of four dining parties; and
he

he then asked the lady how it was possible for the attention with which she had favoured him to remain unsuspected, if her father's officious malice continued to countenance the suggestions of impertinence and detraction? Her ladyship's sentiments on this head may readily be anticipated. She vented her indignation in the strongest language; and so impetuous was her thirst for vengeance, that she listened to Raymond's arguments on the expediency of freeing herself from such unwarrantable tyranny, without any *immediate* marks of disapprobation. At this instant she perceived a gentleman in black sufficiently near them to give her cause to suspect that they were overheard.

When pride stoops to folly or baseness, the keenness of its sensations often betrays it into a greater degree of weakness and absurdity. Lady Caroline had

only caught a glimpse of the stranger; she did not immediately consider that he might be only a casual wanderer in the Stygian shades, and not a spy upon her conduct; or that, while there was a chance that their conversation had not been overheard, it would be as wise to appear to be only admiring Hercules: yet, yielding to the timidity of conscious error, she could think of no other alternative than immediate flight. A half open door and glimmering light decided her choice of a place of concealment; and she darted, very *mal à-propos*, into Sir Peter's dormitory. His uncouth appearance, and their mutual surprise at this odd *rencontre* gave a new turn to her thoughts, and suggested the excuse that she had staid behind on purpose to discover his retreat.

Though this apology, and the merriment that her levity excited, served to gloss over her absence for the present,

the recollection of the man in black haunted her with the conviction that there had been a witness of her folly. Her solicitude to discover who this undesired confidant could be, soon terminated in certainty. Mr. Brudenell was the only gentleman absent; and, on his entering the room soon after, Lady Caroline found it impossible any longer to support her feigned vivacity. She sat down to ruminate on the mortifying certainty that she had degraded herself in the eyes of the only person whose approbation she was anxious to acquire, because that approbation was founded on immutable principles, and was never subjected to the fluctuations of spleen, rash prejudice, or blind partiality.

I would here submit one admonition to the attention of worthy characters. Let me intreat them to consider the vast importance of engrafting the *amiable* graces on the stock of *intrinsic* goodness;

by reflecting on the happy influence that such a combination ever has, as well on those who indulge themselves in immoral excesses, as on those who, while they scoff at *abstract* theories of virtue, cannot avoid reverencing its *living* image when adorned with its *genuine* attributes. Lady Caroline could despise the censure of a host of fools. She could have retorted scorn, repelled impertinence, ridiculed officious zeal, and refuted the dogmatism of cynical superciliousness ; but to the silent rebuke of genuine worth, to a censure pointed by real friendship, and softened by benevolent regret, she was keenly susceptible. She fancied that Mr. Brudenell at once condemned and pitied her weakness. She thought that she beheld the gentle Sophy blushing at her folly ; and, while she anticipated these evils, the adulation of rival coxcombs and the envy of rival belles were disregarded.

Lady

Lady Caroline impatiently wished for an opportunity of conversing alone with Mr. Brudenell. It soon occurred; and, for the first time in her life, she found herself deserted by the gay powers of wit and invention. She endeavoured so to lead the conversation, as to induce Mr. Brudenell to discover what he knew, without her being in danger either of needlessly criminating herself, or of still farther forfeiting the good man's favour, by affecting to disguise what was well known. Mr. Brudenell saw her perplexity, and humanely relieved it.—

“Am I,” said he, “presumptuous in supposing that your ladyship wishes to put my frequent assurances of friendship to the test, by engaging me as your confidant? Believe me, madam, my zeal to serve you shall only be bounded by my ability so to do; nor shall I prescribe any conditions. You well know what services will accord with my character

and function, and I am persuaded that you will require no other."

"Are you acquainted with Mr. Raymond?" inquired Lady Caroline with hesitation.

"No other way than from what I saw of him yesterday evening."

"And may I ask your opinion of him from that knowledge?"

"I should hope, madam, that he has some very valuable properties, to counterbalance the impropriety of the conversation which, pardon me, I undesignedly heard him address to you."

"Lord Glanville has used him in the basest manner."

"I know not his lordship's reasons, madam; but I think that Mr. Raymond cannot properly urge his attempt to seduce you to consent to a clandestine elopement, as a proof that your father has *mistaken* his disposition."

"He

“ He has been treated in a manner which no gentleman could endure.”

“ Ought he then to throw off that character,” said Mr. Brudenell with energy, “ and act the part of the meanest fortune-hunter, or the most desperate adventurer? I presume not to doubt the existence of some meritorious qualities. I conceive that without them he could not have made any progress in your good opinion. But the man whom you favour should be chary of your reputation. Honoured by so flattering a preference, he should respect your fair fame, and lay it down as the grand outline of his conduct, that the world will think him utterly unworthy of you, if he should take advantage of your regard to *seduce* you to an action that will call in question your prudence, your delicacy, and your filial piety.”

“ My prudence and my delicacy, Sir,” said Lady Caroline, colouring, “ are,

and I trust ever will be, unquestioned. As to what you term filial piety, our ideas differ. I disown all ties to the earl of Glanville, but those of general good will. I have no reason to thank him for being the involuntary cause of my existence. The laws of his country compelled him to support me. He bestowed an expensive education on me, to gratify his own vanity; but in that education his precepts and his practice were eternally at variance. I formed my own character; and the rules that he strove to imprint on my memory bade me despise his selfishness, his mean dread of death, and his still meaner envy of those who were to supply his place on the stage of existence. Since the introduction of yourself and Sophia into the family, though it is an event at which I rejoice, as I trust it blesses me with the society of two faithful friends whom I can esteem, my sentiments with
respect

respect to Lord Glanville have become more decided ; I contrast your frankness with his reserve, your desire to make others happy with that fretful anxiety which in him continually revolves in the narrow circle of individual gratification. You study no disguises, you search for no opportunity of displaying your own excellencies. I *hear* from him nothing but his own panegyric, or some hollow compliment ; and I *see* in him nothing but meanness, vanity, and dissimulation. I speak frankly, Mr. Brudenell, for my soul detests deceit ; and I will own, what indeed I could not disguise, that you have piqued me by the freedom of your remarks on Mr. Raymond. But do not leave me," continued she, bursting into tears at seeing Mr. Brudenell rising as if to retire ; " counsel, direct, if you can *preserve* me. I lay no injunction on you, but what suits your sacred charac-

ter. To protect the orphan is a part of your duty, and I am as an orphan."

It may be conceived that those feelings must be acute which could bend the lofty spirit of Lady Caroline Glanville to the humility of intreaty, or to the weakness of apparent grief. Mr. Brudenell was deeply affected.—“Let me,” said he, “first express my regret for having offended you, and then promise to persevere in the services that you require of me, even if I should so far wound your keen susceptibility, as to awaken your—I trust only momentary—resentment. You have required my assistance by such a sacred claim, as no start of petulance, I will even say no *erroneous conduct*, can invalidate. And now, not to waste our time in vain professions, let me suggest a plan that may restore your peace of mind. Whatever your sentiments of Lord Glanville

ville may be, I am convinced that your heart would be more at ease if he were acquainted with your intentions in favour of Mr. Raymond. Suffer me to inform him of your preference for that gentleman."

"Ah, Mr. Brudenell! I thought you better skilled in the art of reading characters. In the first place, can you be ignorant that, unless a very strong light enabled you to see the earl grind his teeth and contract his brows, his words would not convey to you the least shadow of his intentions or wishes? He would tell you, that his daughter was free as air, that whoever she selected would be most welcome to the participation of his fortune, and to the first place in his friendship. And, perhaps, the next day the country would be inquiring why Raymond *suddenly* disappeared. Dead men tell no tales, Mr. Brudenell."

“ O, Lady Caroline ! such suggestions not only transcend the bounds of duty, but of charity also, and I will add of *justice*.”

“ Can *you* then forget Miss Aubrey’s history, the murder of her brother, and the cruel desertion of your Sophy’s brave unhappy father? You gently glossed over this story when you repeated it to me ; but, beside what I have gained from Jervais, I have had a sight of Mrs. Herbert’s affecting narrative. That tale of sorrow, destitute of all artificial colouring, speaks to the heart, and requires no comment. Have I not also my own mother’s well-remembered wrongs to revenge? She tenderly loved *me*, and I know her heart was broken by the cruel injuries and base neglect that she experienced. O, Mr. Brudenell! be ingenuous; confess that I cannot think too ill of Lord Glanville.”

“ You

“ You have imposed upon me a very difficult task,” replied the venerable counsellor. “ My sacred office calls upon me to abhor sin wherever I see it ; but it also bids me unite with that abhorrence my most earnest endeavours to reclaim the offender. I am not an apologist for Lord Glanville’s offences. The steps that I took to restore Miss Aubrey’s representative to her just rights will shew you the point of view in which I regard her seducer. I will farther own, that I have had many reasons to think your delineation of Lord Glanville’s character correct. But pardon me if I reprove you for exaggerating its dark shades, instead of endeavouring to soften them. The hand of a child should rather be employed in throwing a veil over a father’s shame, than in pointing it out to general observation. The rule of conduct which, with defective ability, yet with humble sincerity
of

of heart, I attempt to follow, prescribes duty to a parent as a positive injunction, no way dependent on the inherent qualities of the person who has a natural right to claim it. Christianity also requires us to return good for evil, to be ready at all times to renounce our wishes, in order to promote the good of others; and it requires us to distinguish carefully between aversion to sin and personal enmity to an offender. Your discernment, madam, must convince you how admirably these rules are adapted to the idea which our holy faith presents us, of the nature of fallen, dependent, peccable, and finite man. You will allow that they are designed to strengthen the bond of social union, by teaching us to sympathize in the frailty of our common nature, while they enjoin a most watchful attention to our own conduct. Lord Glanville is, indeed, very faulty; but are we innocent? For myself,

self, I cannot throw a stone. I am conscious that in the contest I had with him, while I was endeavouring to restore Sophia to her birthright, I was sometimes hurried on by resentment, and sometimes stimulated by ambition. Even now, while with partial kindness you pronounced my panegyric, I felt the dangerous inticement of vanity impelling me to an unwarrantable confidence in my own desert. Warned by this recent example, suffer me Lady Caroline to say, that the wisest course is, to fix our eyes upon our own conduct, and to regard that of others no farther than as we have power to correct and amend it; or to preserve ourselves and our fellow-creatures from the baleful effects of vice, either when it operates by secret treachery, open hostility, or pernicious example. Let us be careful to do what is right; we shall not answer for the sins of others. One word more, dear lady:
 surely

surely even moral prudence bids us beware of punishing ourselves, by way of shewing our enemies that we dare be revengeful."

Lady Caroline paused.

"Are these," said she to herself, "the tenets of a faith which I have been taught to consider as broaching contradictory doctrines, and enforcing impracticable morals? I have been told, that Christianity was the fabrication of ambitious men who sought to erect an enormous system of speculation and priestly government on the credulity of the ignorant multitude; and that, in order to consolidate their usurpation, the clergy uniformly insisted on duties so inimical to the common affairs of life, and to the general views of mankind, that they required a previous renunciation of all temporal pursuits, as an initiatory step, without which it was impossible to have any chance of a happy futurity. Does
Mr.

Mr. Brudenell's compendium of Christian morals accord with the expositions that I have heard of that famous text, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon?" He seems to pay attention to *expedience* and worldly polity; at least his tenets coincide with an enlightened view of civil society, and the intricacies of the human character."

I will not accompany Lady Caroline through the train of her musings. Thought is volatile, uncircumscribed, and impetuous in its evolutions; and Lady Caroline alternately felt offended, reproved, and delighted. Now persuaded that Mr. Brudenell had glossed over the absurdities of his system; now convinced that his nature was too ingenuous to affect belief, while he *doubted* in his heart. She at last resolved to admit religion to a full impartial hearing, by paying as much attention to the representations of its sincere friend, as she had
done

done to the false glosses of its adversaries, or to the mis-statements of some well-intentioned but injudicious advocates. But, like the alarmed but irresolute Felix, she deferred this examination to a more “*convenient season.*”

But, though she postponed her acceptance of the cordial of immortality which this kind physician of souls was eager to present, she continued anxious to retain his favour.—“ You have degraded me in my own eyes,” said she to Mr. Brudenell; “ and I will own, self-humiliation is to me both a *new* and a *painful* sensation. You seem to think it wholesome, and I will try to endure it. I cannot, however, let it be accompanied with the certainty that I have forfeited your esteem; you must therefore act up to your own precepts, and mingle chastisement with benignity to the offender. I see that I have acted very wrong; yet while I find myself involved in the consequences

sequences of my own faults, I am not mean nor envious. I rejoice in Sophia's *brighter* prospects. I yield her the fortune to which I considered myself heiress, without feeling any diminution of my affection for her. I will mention too (for, perhaps, it is only in my present train of thought that I can speak of myself without impropriety) a renunciation still more difficult to a *female* mind: I saw the attentions of the amiable Selborne to her without envy, and I rejoiced at my fair friend's conquest at the very instant that I felt the *infinite* inferiority of my own admirer."

"O, Lady Caroline!" returned Mr. Brudenell, "how noble is your native self! But even the richest soil requires careful cultivation."

"We will talk farther on this subject," said Lady Caroline, rising. "I see the point to which you would lead me, and will endeavour to determine

as

as you would wish. I say nothing to you on the subject of secrecy; for, though you learned my situation without my intending that you should, I know you will not betray me. But tell me, does Sophia know my folly? Do I also look meanly in her eyes?"

Mr. Brudenell assured her that no one but himself knew of her interview with Raymond; and, after a deep sigh, Lady Caroline retired; assuring him that he should soon hear farther from her on this subject.

CHAP. XVII.

*The Politics of Fitz John Place continue in
Opposition to those of Glanville Castle.*

ON leaving Mr. Brudenell, Lady Caroline determined to enter upon an immediate scrutiny of her own heart; for, while she listened to his precepts, she thought nothing could be more glaring than the absurdity of encouraging the addresses of a man who was little more than indifferent to her, for the sake of mortifying her father. She resolved to ask herself these serious questions: "Could I pass my life happily with Raymond? Are his temper, character, habits, and taste, so congenial to my own as to render a union with him *necessary*
to

to my peace?" These inquiries led her to ponder on the character of her adorer; and, though her ladyship had enough of the romantic to feel little doubt of the existence of pure disinterested passion in what others would think very suspicious circumstances, she could not help owning that, in the present case, if her person had been more like Hecate than Hebe, it was very *possible* for a younger brother to fall in love with the reputed heiress of eight thousand a year. The reputed heiress—those words suggested a project; and she determined to put Mr. Raymond's attachment to the test, by assuring him that she was precluded from inheriting the Glanville fortune.

Projects are generally unfortunate things to young ladies. Indeed I have a general dislike to them; and I have so often seen the quickness of female feeling betray the most profound scheme of female subtlety, that I have never regretted our
exclusion

exclusion from political rights, though some of my sister authors have lamented it with pathetic and somewhat acrimonious susceptibility. I am, indeed, convinced that a *female* parliament would not only (to use a quaint phrase) be continually flying off in a tangent, but that a *female* administration would be so soon out-generalled by a *male* opposition, that it is not worth while to struggle for a supremacy which we want circumspection to render permanent. And, since unsuccessful resistance always incurs the odious name of rebellion, it is perhaps the wisest course to conform to the long established treaty which has subsisted between us and our present governors (though some of the articles are certainly inconvenient), lest we should, by an ill-concerted insurrection, give them a plea for stricter coercion. My fair readers may be assured that, though I make this free statement of
my

my opinion, I shall not omit to put in a saving clause in favour of our right to *remonstrate*, which is a very ancient branch of the female prerogative, and cannot be given up.

To apply these observations to private life: I am so thoroughly convinced of the general unfitness of my sex for any thing that wears the appearance of plot, chicanery, and deep design, that I would strongly advise my fair readers never to have recourse to such surreptitious assistance, but to rest their actions on the firm basis of integrity, candour, and generous frankness; with this sole reservation, that they put these noble qualities under the guidance of discretion. An artful woman is a monster, and generally a fool. I would particularly advise all *spinsters* under the age of five and twenty never to attempt to outwit a lover who is not fairly turned of his grand climacteric. If he be, I not only
3 allow

allow that amorous threescore and ten is fair game, but that it is easily caught, even by the simplicity of eighteen, and generally without any assistance from the lady mother : it is, therefore, lawful to turn it to the best advantage.

To return to my narrative : As Lady Caroline conceived it impossible that Raymond should know any thing of her claims to the Lewson property, she thought his disinterestedness was fairly put to the test, by informing him that she was not the *heiress* of the Glanville fortune. Now, though this intelligence somewhat chilled the ardour of Raymond's attachment, yet after a little struggle the tender flame revived with all its wonted fury. He had, indeed, a deeper knowledge of the fortune-hunter's arithmetic than his charmer supposed ; and, after an exact calculation, he discovered that it was at least ten to one against his securing a better match ; for I must observe, that this

acute inquirer knew the contents of Lord Lewson's will to a tittle, and even the funds in which his fortune was deposited.

His answer to the Lady was of course full of joy, rapture, hope, and eternal love. Now that the immense and soul-appalling difference between them was removed, he felt authorized to talk of his own prospects. Had he detailed these at length, they would have stretched out like the royal line of Banquo, and perhaps with as visionary an aspect. They consisted in the firm friendship of Lord Phantome, the gratitude of the Marquis of Lethe, the reiterated promises of Sir Tittup Cantwell, and a chance of succeeding to old Scapegrace's fortune, against which latter possibility nothing could be urged but that old Scapegrace was in perfect submission to his housekeeper, and so fond of her seven children, that he called them his own dear little darlings. As an enumeration

meration of these prospects would have had an ungentle air in a love-letter, Mr. Raymond supplied them by this well-turned paragraph:

“ And now, dearest Lady Caroline, generous as you are, you must suffer me to talk of my numerous, powerful, and zealous friends; of my noble and extensive connexions; of my wealthy and affectionate relations. Your goodness, O most divine of women! makes me feel proud and humble too; for, while I boast that your esteem is my chief distinction, never was man more favoured than I have been by *general* esteem. I will not any longer offend the active zeal of those who love me. I will not wound their tenderness by indulging the rigid dignity of independence, and the lofty pride of virtue. I will condescend to let them serve me; and when their efforts have placed me in that station for which *they* have long thought me qualified, I will *demand* from the proud

earl of Glanville his daughter, rich in native excellence, though poor in the fordid comprehension of vulgar minds."

Though Lady Caroline was superior to common-place flattery, she really thought some parts of Raymond's letter extremely striking. Our views of wealth are all comparative; and she had been so long used to contemplate her reverfionary right to immense riches, that forty thoufand pounds feemed to her fcarcely worth valuing. Befides, like moft young people bred to the enjoyment of all the luxuries that unbounded affluence can purchafe, she not only under-rated their importance to her own happinefs, but had a very indefinite conception of the value of money. She had often feen people of fmall fortunes with large families make a genteel appearance, and feem eafy and comfortable; and she had never endeavoured to peep behind that curtain which prudence draws over domestic

domestic inquietude. She never reflected on the many heart-aches that must attend an improvident dilation of the purse, nor considered that *external show* must, in such circumstances, be supported at the expence of *internal quiet*. Her favourite studies furnished her with many a philosophic rant against wealth; and, without considering that these philippics smelt strongly of disappointment and discontent, she lolled upon her downy couch, and raved against the anxious solicitude of the worldling.

With regard to rank, her ideas were not quite so abstracted. She saw that it was allowed as a passport to consequence; but the distinction of personal merit was most gratifying to her natural vanity and acquired prejudices. She had spent most of her life on the continent. She had seen empires and states

suddenly overwhelmed, and hereditary fortunes involved in public ruin. Amidst this general wreck, genius alone seemed to have power to brave the storm; or, rather, so to direct the jarring elements as to make them instrumental in conducting it to the desired haven. At present she had seen little of English society; and from that little was led to doubt whether it had not still too aristocratic a tendency, to allow that distinction to superior talent, merely from admiration of its powers, which the convulsed state of affairs abroad permitted men of abilities to *obtain*. Here, then, were two points which she resolved to investigate the ensuing winter; namely, whether Mr. Raymond's pretensions to intellectual pre-eminence were real, and whether those claims were *generally* allowed.

Let us leave Lady Caroline in this humour, and repair to FitzJohn Place,
where

where it may be expected that black despair and disappointment reigned. To add to all the mischances of the ball, Lady FitzJohn had adopted the opinion, that this strange miss, whom nobody knew, and every body liked, was intentionally a rival to Melisandriana. She observed, that Sophia spoke to Lord Glanville several times in the course of the evening, which, according to her view of affairs, was abominably forward; and so she hoped the earl thought; for she heard him answer her in that laconic querulous style which very high-bred gentlemen use to their own family, or to people that they don't care about. Lady Caroline, indeed, seemed very fond of this miss; but Lady Caroline was—— I think it prudent not to fill up this hiatus, especially when I inform my readers, that Lady FitzJohn had now positively determined, that this most malicious of daughters

not only saw and opposed her father's attachment, but absolutely introduced this humble cousin, to use her own words, to set her cap at the old man, and do as her mistress bade her. Melisandriana, she observed, had too much good sense to be so docile; but, as this base attempt of Lady Caroline's "to break the lily band of plighted love" called for condign punishment, Lady FitzJohn was resolved to inflict it.

The breakfast party assembled at a late hour the morning after the gala; and Sir Bronze, who really was perfectly sober, felt a little doubtful whether he did not "out-Herod Herod" in his extravagancies the preceding evening. But the lovely Melisandriana soon prevented the intrusion of that cast-off acquaintance called Modesty, with whom, many years ago, Sir Bronze had a most *irreconcilable* quarrel, by playing off a little adroit flattery in a
neat

neat manner. She called the breaking open the closet door a *delightful explosion*, and affirmed that the ladies were almost convulsed with laughter, when, on the waiter's bringing him lemonade instead of champagne, he tossed the liquor as neatly into the fellow's gaping mouth, as if he had done it with a pop-gun. Sir Bronze, though he did not admire the pop-gun, was really glad of a little praise; and a very promising flirtation commenced, which drew many significant nods and smiles from her ladyship, and one dolorous "humph!" from Sir Peter. As to Mr. Artremidorus, the part that he played on these occasions was uniform. Unless he fortunately met with an opportunity of *shining*, by execrating the muffins, confounding the chocolate, or emptying the contents of the tea-pot into the slop-basin, with a protestation that it was too infernally

nauseous, he contented himself with picking his teeth, or rolling with his two pointers on the chintz sofa.

“But, dear Sir Bronze,” exclaimed Lady FitzJohn after a long continued he! he! he! and a declaration that she seldom laughed, but really his wit was insufferable; “Do you know any thing of that Miss Herbert? I thought her rather an *odd-looking* girl.”

“A mere *twaddle*,” returned Sir Bronze, who readily adopted the proper cue. “She *dashed* a little last autumn at Bath, but nobody minded her. Oh yes: faith my memory is so devilish bad, there was an old fellow on two crutches, a Sir——plague on’t I can’t think of these Welsh baronets. Oh, Sir William Evans. He used to put on his *green* spectacles, and look at her; but the thing did not take; yet I can’t say it was the girl’s fault.”

“Oh,”

“ Oh,” said Lady FitzJohn, “ how soon you men of true fashion find out forward girls. So she could not catch old Sir Taffy after all? Well it is so unmeasurably comical. But I doubt whether Miss will have better success with her present flame.”

“ Who’s that ?” inquired Sir Bronze. “ Upon my soul, Lady FitzJohn, you quite terrify me. I think hanging and marrying just alike ; and if this enterprising lady has any designs upon *me*, speak—quick—by all our friendship, I’ll order my curricule, and drive to the antipodes in an instant.”

“ Or to the devil sooner than be married,” re-echoed Mr. Artremidorus.

“ Oh fye, Artre, my dear,” returned her ladyship very gravely. “ You always will go *too far* a great deal. Though, I own, girls of this age are so brought up, that they deter *prudent* men from marrying. I saw the evil of

this custom, so educated Melisandriana myself, under my own eye; and I am sure she has not *one* idea that I did not inculcate. But I believe, Sir Bronze, you need not be alarmed about this Miss Herbert. That is to say, I mean, not just yet. Your turn may be next for any thing I know; but at present, I find, she strikes at an earl. Pray did you mind when Melisandriana fainted, how she stepped up to Lord Glanville, with a "I hope you are not hurt, Sir?" I blushed at her impudence I vow; and I thought she might have had more humanity *too*, for there was my timid love fainting, and nobody to catch her if she fell: for his lordship stood looking at her, so affected, that he had not power to stir."

"You forget," said Sir Bronze with a loud laugh, "that I was closeted when the fiddlers turned tumblers."

"O

“O dear Sir Bronze!” exclaimed Melisandriana, “don’t mention the closet again, if you have any love for me, or I shall die of laughing.”

Lady FitzJohn gently struck her daughter’s elbow, by way of a maternal check; and turning to Sir Bronze, who seemed a little astonished, observed, that this was all pure nature. “The most undefining creature in the world,” continued she. “But I want to hear more about Miss Herbert. Does any body know what she is, or who she is? No fortune I suppose?”

“She does not look like a girl of fortune,” replied Sir Bronze; “but I don’t know how it was, there was a sort of talk that she would be somebody some time or other. A confused tale about her being related to a lord, who had *reasons* for not owning her.”

“I understand you,” said Lady FitzJohn nodding. “Pray, Sir Bronze, don’t

don't speak any plainer.—Melisandriana, love, take your harp; you know you are always *miserable* when you are not at your music.—I send her away, Sir,” whispering the baronet, “because she is the most *delicate* creature in the world; the least blunt expression *distresses* her. But as to Miss Herbert, I have such an utter aversion to *such sort* of doings, that I think people of *that sort* never should come into company. But you know Lady Caroline is so wise, and enlightened in her own *conceit*, that to be sure one must not direct *her*, else I would say *people* of Miss Herbert's description are not fit company for honestly-born young ladies. Don't you think so, Sir Bronze?”

Sir Bronze was relieved from the trouble of answering this harangue, by Artemidorus declaring, with a loud yawn, that they were spending the morn-

ing in a confoundedly stupid manner. A spirited debate ensued between the gentlemen, which, as it consisted of very little beside fashionable oaths and cant phrases, I will not transcribe. Though the fair Melifandriana continued to “strike the warbling wire,” with (at least in her own opinion) the beauty, grace, and execution of a Cecilia, her barbarous brother bore off the baronet, to witness the rapturous enjoyments of a cock-fight.

“I declare he grows more and more brutish every day, and I hate him worse and worse,” cried the fair enraged musician, stepping from her harp the moment Sir Bronze was out of hearing, and following him with her straining eyes from the window. I wonder if it is the fashion for brothers to be so rude.”

“Yes,” said Lady Fitz John, “all the stylish men that I know behave like boors

boors to their sisters. Don't mind it, love; for, you know, Artre will get elevated after dinner; and then, if Sir Bronze be sober, you may sing and play to *him* all the evening. But I have just made a great discovery. As sure as you are alive, Miss Herbert is nothing but a base-born brat of Lord Glanville's, and I am astonished that Lady Caroline can seem to be fond of her."

"Oh mamma!" returned Miss Fitz-John, "it came in two winters ago for very high ladies to stand godmothers to the natural children of all their relations. Lady Random topped the fashion; for she was so fond of a little odious thing of her husband's, that she dressed it in a Circassian dress, and made it sit by her cross-legged on the sofa, with a white turban on; and if any body asked her who the pretty creature was, she always answered, "Only a little mistake of Sir Peregrine's."

"Aye,"

“Aye,” said Lady FitzJohn, “I thought Lady Caroline had some authority for her whims. I don’t mind this Miss Herbert now, for she cannot stand in your light, you know.”

“La, mamma! I wish you would not keep talking to me about that ugly old man. He is so gloomy, and so solemn, and as Sir Bronze says, such a moving mountain of misery, that I declare even dancing with him gave me the vapours, and I could not look up again the whole evening.”

“To be sure, child,” resumed Lady FitzJohn, “he is but a disagreeable sort of a man; but then that will be of no consequence, only just during courtship; for after you are married you will see very little of my lord, you know. Not but that I hope you will make a very prudent wife, and I dare say you will be quite exemplary in your behaviour.

viour. I would not, however, have you over-observant neither; for you must go out, my dear, when you are a countess, to keep up your connexions, and to shew your equipage, and for your health's sake, and to prevent being low spirited; and if my lord can't go with you, why he must stay at home, you know. And so I hope you will go on very well, till the dear dead old man sets you quite at liberty; and then, who knows? you may have a second chance for Sir Bronze."

"Oh, Sir Bronze never will marry me when I am old and ugly."

"Dear love, what can make you so low? though, to be sure, the Madona look does become you. Try it on Sir Bronze this afternoon; for I would not have you break with him, till you are quite sure of my lord. But, as I was observing, if you should be countess of Glanville, and if the earl should die,—
we

we will give him seven years.—No, stay —seven years is too long. I think the chances are in your favour that you will be a widow in five. I think my lord is about seventy. Seventy and eighteen—I would not have you accept of one farthing less than four thousand a year jointure, and you must have a thousand a year pin-money.”

“Oh good gracious!” interrupted the young lady, “do you think my lord would give me four thousand a year? Why it is more than Sir Bronze is worth!”

The appearance of Sir Peter put an end to this conversation; and Lady FitzJohn ordered her chariot, for the double purpose of returning thanks to the ladies who had honoured her with their company, and of traducing the birth, parentage, and education of Sophia.

Every

Every body recollects the reason of Lady Bluemantle's morning travels : Lady FitzJohn's were rather similar. At the first place she called at, she pitied poor Lady Caroline, for being compelled to associate with her father's illegitimate child. At the next, she extolled her ladyship's generosity, in raising the poor thing from obscurity. At the third, she congratulated the neighbourhood on the *honourable* addition that Lord Glanville had introduced ; and at the fourth, she obliquely hinted, that, though some people were very compassionate to *those sort* of beings, for her own part she had a strong persuasion that virtues and vices were hereditary, and that the young lady commonly behaved as "mamma had done before her." Sophia's efforts to draw in a Welsh baronet, whose name Lady FitzJohn *prudently* forgot, were constantly mentioned with variations.

ations and amplifications; an attempt was made to implicate Mr. Brudenell in the charge of assisting the schemes of a female adventurer; and the narrative always concluded with the intelligence, that these people had made themselves so notorious at Bath, that a friend of hers, a very pleasant young man, and one who lived much in the great world, was quite terrified when he heard that Miss Herbert was come into that neighbourhood; protesting that she was such a determined general in the matrimonial line, that when once she laid siege, sap, stratagem, and assault were all at once applied to force a speedy surrender, and you must either found a parley or make a speedy retreat.

I need not add that all these communications were made under the strict seal of secrecy, which was as faithfully preserved as such covenants usually are.

A very

A very delightful bustle ensued in the neighbourhood. In proportion to the degree of credulity in the hearers of the story, the circulation increased, the narrative varied, and the wonder magnified; till at last the original story grew so inextricably involved, that even scandal was ashamed of it, and, after having been in entire possession of Sophia's secret history, was forced to confess that it was all a mistake, for that nothing could be said of her materially to her disadvantage.

CHAP. XVIII.

An odd Medley. Politics resorted to as a Nostrum for the Spleen. A Lady loses her Heart, while the Winner seems looking another Way.

As I affect originality, I must often claim a licence to transgress the established rules of novel composition. I here give public notice, that it is not my intention to recapitulate minutely all that my heroes and heroines say, do, and think *every* day, during that period of their lives which I take upon me to chronicle with fidelity. With all due respect to my contemporaries, I give it as my opinion, that since in the ordinary occurrences of life, and in common conversation,

versation, very illustrious personages appear but like other people, it would be advisable for all annalists, especially *female* ones, to study the art of abridgment and compression ; at this particular time, when the *scarcity* of paper so ill accords with the *exuberance* of genius. I had once a scheme to recommend myself to the public as a professor in the art of brevity ; and as I found that by leaving out all extraneous matter, such as unconnected episodes, abuse on governments, sarcasms on religion, philosophical, geographical, botanical, astronomical, chemical, and all other digressions, which are introduced with the sole view of shewing the writer's profound knowledge ; together with all descriptions of dress, all very tender love-scenes, and every adventure that does not absolutely tend to further the progress of the principal story or to impress some useful precept ; finding, I repeat,

that I could, by such a use of my scissars, contract many a modern Iliad till I could cram it into a nutshell, I did expect the applause of all muslin-misses and pink-slippered beaux, who live upon the food of circulating libraries, and of course swallow a great deal of unwholesome and undigestible trash. But, having discovered that the ravenous appetite of these literati is more solicitous about the *quantity* than the *quality* of their nourishment, I began to fear that these Maximii in learning would not thank me for reducing their sustenance to the scanty portion of a little good sense; for, though I know they constantly complain that their repasts are too substantial, or, rather, too long, yet I am now convinced that the tedium of unemployed time would, to vacant minds, be still more insupportable. I therefore renounce my Quixote scheme of effecting

a general reformation, and will confine myself to the best way of removing every evil, I mean by setting an excellent example. My brevity shall form as striking a contrast to the copiousness of my scribbling sisters, as my dignified modesty does to their egotism. Let other authoresses force their own adventures and characters on the public eye; Mrs. Prudentia Homespun, with the delicate propriety of real genius, will ———But, fearful of incurring the charge of inconsistency, I will trust to the affection of my readers to fill up this blank with propriety. As this chapter is intended to comprize some *months* of narrative, I trust that I shall at least escape the censure of prolixity. Though Lord Glanville had received a summons to attend the meeting of parliament, and though political importance was his first wish, he continued to reside at his castle.

He

He was as yet unable to resolve on the manner in which he should introduce Sophia to the world, being fearful of the inquiries that her appearance must excite, and the rumours which it might revive. He was also alarmed with the apprehension that the fatigue of legislative attendance, and the dissipation incident to a town-life, might injure his declining health ; which was by this time become so much affected, that he could no longer refer his painful sensations to cold east winds, damps, or indeed any other causes than secret discontent, preying on feeble age, and unawakened conscience disclosing to the *would-be* infidel the evidences of a future world.

To these motives for remaining in the country, others were opposed which strongly induced him to hasten to London. It had long been his design to bestow his daughter in marriage on a

young nobleman who was considered as the leading character in opposition; and, as the inducement of a large fortune and extensive connexions must, he well knew, operate upon the heart of the intended lover, he did not doubt of his joyfully acceding to the scheme, provided he could bring the parties to a *previous* interview: but the difficulty was, how to manage with Lady Caroline. Raymond continued at W——, with no other motive for staying, but that of being near his mistress, and openly boasting of her preference, which indeed she took no pains to conceal, at least from her father's eye. She knew, indeed, that this behaviour gave him the severest uneasiness; but virtue is not to turn out of its steady course in compliance with the weakness of others; and to two virtues that stand very high in the new school of ethics, Lady Caroline was particularly partial: I mean ingenuousness

nuousness and independence. Lest my readers should be puzzled about the actions of these gentry, I will just add, that they were the old vices of stubbornness and effrontery, with *modernized* titles.

Never was philosophical father more grievously perplexed than poor Lord Glanville, to discover the best means of counteracting the propensities which he had so tenderly cherished. As he could not deny his daughter's natural right to bestow herself on whom she pleased, he could not plead a necessity for paternal interposition, even though he should only mean to snatch her from a most undeserving object, and to save her from misery and shame. Indeed, he had often hinted that paternal authority is a non-entity, or at best but an expedient tie; and when expedience is admitted as the rule of action between two people, each party may give their

own interpretation to a vague, indefinite term; and certainly four-and-twenty, and sixty-eight, are not likely to form corresponding ideas on the subject of love and marriage. To talk about expedience, therefore, was using a language that she could not be expected to understand.

Persuasion might do some good. Lady Caroline's temper, though warm and impetuous, was generous and affectionate to those whom she loved. But persuasion was not Lord Glanville's forte. 'Tis true, he piqued himself upon his knowledge of character, and his art in managing his fellow-creatures; but his pride and his prejudices often defeated his designs, and he seldom flattered till it was too late to cajole. Intimidation was hopeless; he had already seen, by his daughter's generous affection for Sophia, that pecuniary motives had no influence on her passions; and,

as

as she was assured of the possession of Lord Lewson's fortune, the loss of the little her father *could* give her would not be worth one moment's consideration.

To what method then could the unhappy Lord Glanville have recourse, except to his own favourite system of disguise? But were he to invite Raymond to the castle, affect to be pleased with his society, and even to smile upon his pretensions to Lady Caroline, his lordship feared that he had already dissembled too much to deceive his daughter, as to the real motive for his change of conduct. A new conquest seemed the only resource; and for this London was certainly the proper sphere. He knew enough of the world to know that wherever Lady Caroline came she must be admired; and he knew that when admiration was directed to the person of a rich heiress, matrimonial offers would follow of course: but, as choice

generally perplexes, he wished that offer to be first made which he intended her to accept.

The schemes of his own future greatness, which, as I have before observed, were combined with the disposal of Lady Caroline, would have better suited the heyday of vigorous life, than a broken mind and a debilitated body. But it was Lord Glanville's destiny, to be always harassed by a craving for something that he could not attain. Anxious to be thought a great man, yet neglecting whatever would have made him truly deserving of that character, he felt impatient to lose reflection in the bustle and turmoil of public affairs. Retirement had been to him what the fountain was to Narcissus; it had enabled him to contemplate his own portrait: but in this his lordship was no coxcomb; for he was so little satisfied with himself, that

that he never wished to take another glance. Sarcastic observers have remarked, that this is the best state of mind for the formation of the patriotic principle ; as you never can be so keensighted respecting the faults of your rulers, as when you are thoroughly conscious of your own. Nay I have heard it affirmed, that the zeal of a national reformer is amazingly increased, by his being convinced that in the present state of things the only *elevated* situation for which he can hope, is a *certain unenviable exaltation*, that will only give him *one* opportunity of attracting the public notice. As I disclaim the character of a political satirist, I will not determine how many of the Catos and *Brutus*es of the present day have been stimulated by the *above motive* to extraordinary exertions to procure celebrity. I will only observe, that in proportion as Lord Glanville saw his own depravity and con-

temptibleness as a *man*, he was impatient to obtain eclat and reputation as a *party-leader*.

Determined to commence his political career by a powerful and violent opposition; during his residence at Glanville-castle he practised all those arts which lead to popularity and consequence. With a view to the nomination of representatives to the borough of W——, he courted the FitzJohns; and, maugre all the feelings of wounded delicacy or offended pride, added to the painful sensations of infirm health, he regularly attended all the *corporation* dinners, and bowling meetings; nor did one complaining sigh or sarcastic smile escape him. So humble were his bows, so smooth his address, so bland his manners, that he felt confident of success; and when his ever-perturbed thoughts recalled the offences of his past life, and combined with them his present certainty

tainty of decay, he strove to exorcise the busy spirits that haunted his imagination, by inviting the mayor and corporation of W—— to his castle, and listening to their eulogiums on his *virtues* and *importance*.

But Lord Glanville is not the only great man who has over-rated his own consequence, nor the only courtier who has been so very “obliging that he never obliged.” A few good *actions* tell better than an infinitude of good *speeches*; and, however meanly we may judge of the understandings of our inferiors, they have generally discernment enough to discover the tendency of overdone complaisance. If we would smile with effect, we must beware of *suspicious* smiles.

While Lord Glanville thus endeavoured to combat with the reproaches of conscience and the advanced guards of the King of Terrors, by indulging

in airy dreams of future greatness, Lord Selborne contrived to gain an introduction to the Castle, where he soon became a frequent and not unwelcome guest. In compliance with the request of an uncle, whose person he loved, and whose judgment he revered, he had turned his attention to the amiable granddaughter of a man whom he knew by common report to be one who was an honour to the human character. I know that it is contrary to all the laws of novel writing to assign a dutiful or even a *prudential* reason for the commencement of a hero's attachment, who ought to plunge flap-dash into love, without any demur about whys or wherefores. I rather think I ought to feel a little ashamed of the Goth that I am going to introduce, when I am obliged to allow, that Lord Selborne did not suppose the virtues and graces of Sophia *diminished*, by her being pointed

pointed out to him, by a relation on whom he had a considerable dependence, as an object worthy his matrimonial choice. How it could happen I cannot conceive; but he certainly became so much in love with her, that what was at first acquiescence with prudential and grateful motives, soon became the chief wish of his heart. He seized an early opportunity to acquaint Mr. Brudenell, on whom he supposed his charmer solely depended, that the triumph of mild wit and modest beauty was complete; and he urged him to that lively mediation in his behalf which Sir William Evans had requested his old friend to use, in case Lord Selborne should be as deeply sensible of Sophia's merits as the good baronet earnestly hoped he would be. He now heard, with that pleasure which results from a laudable thirst for valuable praise, Mr. Brudenell express his approbation of his suit.—“ I will not,”
said

said the good man with characteristic frankness, “ disguise my ardent wish to intrust my darling child to the care of a worthy husband. I have hitherto been her only protector ; but, my lord, according to the course of nature, I must soon resign that office ; and some circumstances that I am not at liberty to explain, excite in my mind an apprehension for her future tranquillity, which sometimes exceeds the limits that religion instructs us to impose on our *temporal* solitudes. For many reasons I wish her yours. Yet, as a precipitate declaration might plunge you both into many and great perplexities, I say at present, be *only her friend*. Study her character, my lord ; observe not only its general excellence, but even how far her virtues correspond with your own. Permit her to have the same opportunities of observing and justly appreciating your merits ; and if this mutual circum-

spection

spection confirms your mutual regard, your prospect of future happiness will be more secure than if your union resulted from a hasty start of feverish inclination. I think it my duty farther to inform you, that my sanction alone is not sufficient: Lord Glanville has a voice in the disposal of Sophia. There is some cause to fear that his views may not correspond with mine; and as his character is too mysterious for me to attempt a reciprocal frankness of communication, I dare not address him on the subject. The progress that you may be able to make in his good opinion will tend to further your wishes."

If Lord Selborne perceived something in the preceding conversation to awaken his fears, he saw more to encourage his hopes; especially as Mr. Brudenell afterwards owned, that, when his clerical duties compelled him to leave Glanville castle, Sophia would need the encouraging

ging presence and kind advice of a faithful friend. Such an office suited the generous nature of Selborne's attachment. Esteem and confidence are the basis of friendship; and friendship between two amiable young people of different sexes is so very like love, that I know not how to define the distinction. Sophia soon found herself uncomfortable, unless encouraged by the presence of her *friend*; and he anticipated so many occasions on which she might want his assistance, that, like Titus, he thought the day lost, if a part of it was not devoted to the service of knight-errantry. Sophia was not so affectedly coquetish as to misconstrue his assiduities; nor did he misinterpret the modest blush and timid smile by which the lovely maid rewarded them.

Lady Caroline perceived the attachment of these conscious lovers; and, but for the perplexities of her own situation,

tion, she would have rejoiced in the discovery, both as it gave her an opportunity of exercising her lively talents at raillery, and as she felt truly solicitous for Sophia's happiness. But when we so far deviate from moral rectitude, as to act upon a system which our judgment condemns, we are not sufficiently at ease to indulge the ebullitions of playful fancy; and, strange as it may sound, even the benevolent affections are weakened by our perseverance in an erroneous system of conduct. Her conversation with Mr. Brudenell had taught Lady Caroline to doubt the truth and practicability of that high system of un-deviating rectitude which she had prescribed to herself, or, to speak more precisely, as a rule by which she determined to meet the actions of others, in order, if they fell short of perfection, to excuse herself for her own breaches of duty. She doubted whether Mr.
Brudenell's

Brudenell's precepts of returning good for evil, of being strict in censuring our own faults while we are candid and compassionate to the failings of others, and, above all, of owning positive duties to various relations of life that cannot be *obviated* even by their unworthiness, had not more of the air of true magnanimity, than that severe scheme of retributive justice under which she had attempted to shelter her own refractory behaviour. She doubted, I say: but the natural pertinacity of her temper, that pride of reason which she had been taught, not only to cherish, but to venerate with blind idolatry; these natural and acquired faults, aided by an obstinate predilection for an unworthy object, prevented her from exchanging the pain of doubt, for the peaceful security of conviction and reformation. Dissatisfied with herself, and at enmity with all around her, Lady Caroline generally sup-

supported a forced gaiety for a few minutes, and then sunk into the languor of pensive discontent, or degenerated into the petulance of ill-disguised chagrin.

Lord Selborne's discernment enabled him to discover the secret workings of a perturbed spirit, and his humanity prompted him to endeavour to relieve it. His beloved Sophia, ever equable and gentle, presented, to use the words of a favourite author, "only the mild green of the soul," on which the anxious spirit might peacefully repose. With a temper too amiable to be ruffled by slight provocations, a heart too benevolent to be engrossed by selfish feelings, and principles and views too exalted to be shaken by the rude conflicts of these sublunary elements, what blessings did such a character promise to her wedded partner! How enchanting was her playful vivacity! how persuasive her unassuming

assuming sense! how soothing her unaffected sweetness! Elated by the flattering hope that his Sophia regarded him with preference, Selborne's heart overflowed with that general philanthropy and good-will which prosperity constantly produces in *generous* minds. Lady Caroline's suppressed sighs, a peevishness which she vainly attempted to disguise, her fits of gloomy absence, and transient bursts of ill-sorted mirth, convinced him that she was unhappy, and as an unhappy being he thought her entitled to his most respectful attentions.

Lord Glanville saw with pleasure the young viscount's efforts to divert his daughter's chagrin. Ignorant of the real motive which drew him to Glanville-castle, he imagined that Caroline was the powerful magnet; and, though a military and ministerial son-in-law did not accord with his final views, he
thought

thought an agreeable nobleman in regimentals might prove an admirable lure to withdraw the wayward fair from her perverse attachment to a mere adventurer, and prepare her for the offers of the marquis of Montolieu, with whom he had already entered into a political correspondence. It was to this young nobleman, who had recently come to the enjoyment of his paternal possessions and titles, that he destined the hand of that child whom, by some strange error either in his own conduct or her composition, he found, instead of his comfort and solace, a lasting source of care and perplexity.

With respect to Sophia, the earl intended that she should dedicate her life to his service. He found himself perfectly at ease with her. She bore his ill-humours with patience, accustomed herself to his habits, attached herself to his couch when he was unable to leave it,

it, and exerted herself to amuse him whenever the state of his mind and body permitted him a comparative degree of ease. Notwithstanding the insinuations of some pseudo-moralists, this great master of the art of dissimulation certainly found falsehood a *wearisome* employment; and he grew as heartily tired of acting the part of an indulgent happy father, as he had formerly been of performing the *farce* of an affectionate husband. I would not have the reader suppose that these reflections are preparatory to the intelligence that Lord Glanville *transferred* his affections to his grand-daughter; that nobleman was incapable of affection; but, as people of his disposition always want an object to whom they may vent their spleen, and disclose the wounds of their lacerated minds, he found a convenience in the placid tenderness with which that amiable girl ministered to his sorrows.

Leaving

Leaving Selborne to amuse his wayward daughter, he would frequently require Sophia's attendance in his own apartment, where she sometimes lulled him to rest with her harmonious voice, and at others amused him with an entertaining book, or patiently listened to his querulous exaggerated account of the injuries that he had sustained from a base ungrateful world ; for in that light it always appears to a man of the earl's character. Yet I must again repeat, and may the youthful sinner attend to the awful warning ! in those *comparatively* happy moments Lord Glanville never knew more of delight and contentment than to *feel* his own irreparable loss. The miseries of accursed beings are by some supposed to be increased by distant views of the mansions of the blessed ; and as soon as the earl's agonized feelings began to subside into social pleasure, when his heart seemed disposed to

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cherish

cherish those social affections without which life is a burden, memory presented him with her bitter beverage. The attitude, cadence, or sentiments of the *living*. Sophia recalled the *lost* to his mind; and he frequently sent his comforter from him, sometimes with a complaint that his pains overpowered him, but oftener with a start of petulance, or passionate reproach, unaccountable to all who have not attended to the caprices of a distempered soul. My young readers will be desirous to know what passed in Sophia's bosom on these occasions. They will unanimously agree, that it must be very teasing to be taken from the society of an amiable and approved lover, and subjected to the splenetic extravagancies of a peevish, wretched, unworthy old man. I fancy many of them would have determined to run away from Glanville-castle, renounce their high expectations, and

shelter themselves in the arms of fond affection; by which last sentence I only mean that they would have returned to Mr. Brudenell; for I cannot suppose that any *gentle* nymph, who has kept *me* company through so many pages, could even for a moment cherish the idea of any other elopement. Others, probably, are now on tiptoe with expectation, hoping that I am going to introduce a cross-purpose attachment, or at least to enliven the flatness of this part of my narrative with a few smart scenes of female jealousy.

In answer to these suggestions and hopes, I will, as my way is, deliver a moral precept. The mind that is strictly guarded by a sense of duty will at all times cheerfully submit to what duty requires, and find not only comfort, but the purest pleasures that earth bestows, in fulfilling its allotted part. If Lord Glanville's behaviour sometimes forced

a tear from Sophia, it was a tear of pure benevolence, or meek unrepining grief. As for jealousy, though I affirm that my heroine was as much in love as any heroine ought to be, she certainly never felt one uneasy moment on account of Lord Selborne's attentions to Lady Caroline. Even if Mr. Brudenell had not informed her of the motives of his visits to Glanville-castle, her lover's eyes were such terrible tell-tales, that, though she was less versed in that sort of language than most ladies of her age, she now and then hummed over this line of an old song :

“ With pleasure I see,
Tho' his words are to *her*, yet his looks are to *me*.”

Indeed she had a constant motive for her own actions, which acquitted Selborne of all negligence and disaffection to his liege mistress : I mean a uniform wish to alleviate the sorrows of the unhappy.

happy. So great are the variations of the human character, that what would have ruined this young nobleman in the esteem of *every* romantic damsel in the kingdom, confirmed his influence in Sophia's heart. Ladies of the above description are so fond of seeing their knights in the characters of lovers, that they are generally dissatisfied when they are engaged in any other service. My literary sisterhood, to do them justice, make a notable use of this propensity, by eking out their volumes with as many love-scenes in the space of two hours, as the most murderous beauty can reasonably expect to meet with in the course of her whole life. Determined not to encourage this passion for the extraordinary, and the sentimental, which has so often proved fatal to female repose, the little that I shall say of Lord Selborne shall be devoted to the delineation of his character as a human being.

being. And though falling upon his knees, kissing the lady's hand, wearing a lock of her hair, stealing her picture, with a proper quantity of "Oh's, angels, and divinities," would make him look very agreeable in *my* book, at least in the judgment of eighteen, I should myself feel so conscious of being describing a simpleton, that I never could deem him a fit companion for a woman of sense. I shall, therefore, persist in referring the growth of strong affection between two very deserving young people to the opportunities they mutually had of seeing each other in the most *estimable* point of view, I mean in the uniform practice of the social and domestic virtues.

CHAP. XIX.

*The bitter Fruits of Jealousy, Romance, and
Duplicity.*

THOUGH I hold it impossible for a well-principled, well-regulated mind, who chooses with prudence, and loves with delicacy, to give way to the extravagancies of *groundless* jealousy; yet I am ready to admit the tremendous effects that flow from that dreadful passion. It is, in my opinion, much more frequently the offspring of idleness, caprice, irritability, meanness, and conscious unworthiness, than of a sincere attachment seated in an *honest* heart. It has been said, that he “who does

not doubt does not truly love." Unless this aphorism is solely confined to an humble sense of our *demerits*, it is paying a compliment to the weakness of our nature, at the expence of the noblest of our passions.

Determined to use my utmost endeavours to prevent all froward coxcombs from believing themselves to be lovers, because they place no confidence in the smiling belle to whom they *last* swore invariable attachment, I will plainly tell them that jealousy is a noxious creeper, which, whenever it is suffered to entwine around true affection, retards its growth, blasts its blossoms, and corrodes its fruit. It may be transplanted into more generous ground, but it sprouts *spontaneously* in a *barren* soil.

During the period of Lord Selborne's visits at the castle, Mr. Raymond and this "green-eyed monster" were inseparable companions. Unable to discover

cover the motive for this young nobleman's visits, he adopted the prevalent opinion, that Lady Caroline had chained this son of Mars to her triumphal chariot. He in vain endeavoured, during the *stolen* interviews, with which the venality of Chenille and the weakness of her lady indulged him, to discover *which* of the Glanville divinities was the object of the viscount's adoration; for he would hardly ascribe such a strong intimacy to the hospitality which gentlemen generally shew to the military quartered near their country residences. He knew that Lady Caroline, ever "jealous of honour, sudden and quick in quarrel," would violently resent any direct interrogatories on this head, and not only question his audacity in daring to suspect her, but also the title by which he presumed to claim a right of inquiring into her conduct. Not daring to

disclose his own fears, he heard her commend the talents, person, manners, and conduct of Selborne, with somewhat of that gnawing anguish which Homer ascribes to Thersites, when the Grecian host founded the praises of some deserving hero; and he generally returned from those stolen meetings, which he declared were the most rapturous moments of his existence, in a humour

“ To drink hot blood, and do such deeds

“ As hell should blush at.”

With a hope of procuring some information in the enemy's camp, he formed an intimacy with Selborne's brother officers; but here again all his plans were frustrated. He found that his lordship was scarcely ever at quarters, and his absence was as constantly ascribed to that little tyrant Lady Caroline, whose health was every day drunk after dinner with three cheers, and a wish that she

would

would soon bestow herself and her ample fortune on the honest fellow whom she compelled to such close attendance.

Raymond now endeavoured to glean some consolation from a visit to the FitzJohns; but, worse and worse, he there heard that the marriage was absolutely determined upon. Melifandriana could enumerate all the nuptial attire, and she knew the exact price of the diamond hoop-ring. Lady FitzJohn was as methodical in her recapitulation of the articles of the settlement, as if she had been the engrossing clerk; and Artremidorus knew the names of the racers and hunters which Lord Selborne had purchased, in expectation of this large addition to his fortune. Sir Bronze, lolling back on the sofa, and staring Melifandriana full in the face, protested it was his intention to form an acquaintance with a very stylish girl, whom Selborne had pensioned off, as

an awkward incumbrance in his new character. I hope I need not add, that Miss FitzJohn reproved this libertine speech by a blow with her fan, and an exclamation of “flogging creature;” or that Lady FitzJohn, after an “Oh fye,” and a smile at Sir Bronze’s wit, harangued on the wickedness of the age, and pitied poor Lady Caroline. Such behaviour comes of course from ladies of high decorum; and the Fitz-Johns possessed that exact quantum which, though it imposes no restraint on the conversation of gentlemen, is sure to *notice* with *amazonian* intrepidity every attack on their own delicacy.

Raymond returned to his lodgings with a heavy heart, and a brain full of dark machinations; for, though Sir Bronze was too renowned for his skill at the long bow for any one to attach an idea of *probability* to his communications, he thought that by *altering* one
part

part of the story, *varnishing* the other, and *suppressing* the name of his informant, he might contrive to shape it into a tolerable bugbear, sufficient to terrify a nymph in love. He immediately created a Miss Jenny; and, dressing her very prettily in youth, beauty, and innocence, fixed her in an eminent boarding school. He then brought a handsome young officer under her window, who, after two tender love-letters, and six pathetic couplets, produced a rope-ladder, and persuaded her to elope, and confide in his honour. The lady's family, of course, proved inexorable, and the lover faithless; and, after a variety of very pathetic scenes, Mr. Raymond at last fixed his imaginary frail one in elegant lodgings in Spring-Gardens, with two beautiful children, and at this time deserted by her lover, and in a state of frenzy and extreme distress. Lady Caroline, supposing that this story was

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told

told to excite her compassion, offered Mr. Raymond her purse to relieve the woes of the sufferer; but, after much circumlocution, that subtle defamer observed, that the description of the seducer led him to consider Lord Selborne as the author of this villainous deed, and that his suspicions had received strength from some dark hints thrown out by Miss Randolph. Indignation and horror took full possession of Lady Caroline's soul; and the terms in which she expressed her abhorrence of such nefarious guilt, hid under the mask of open-hearted probity, confirmed Raymond in his jealousy, and prompted him to exult in his own penetration. Misinterpreting the emotion, which in reality only proceeded from her lively sympathy in Sophia's wrongs, he formed a determination to have recourse to some stratagem, which should at once frustrate

frustrate his supposed rival's hopes and confirm his own.

Raymond had but just left the temple, which was the usual scene of his interviews with Lady Caroline, and advanced to the corner of the park-wall that led towards the high road, when he unexpectedly encountered Sophia. That amiable girl, all frankness and delicacy herself, had long felt the most lively anxiety, from the apprehension that Lady Caroline's dejection and perturbation of mind proceeded from a clandestine and unworthy attachment. Fearful that her frequent solitary walks led to interviews with a man whom the earl never named without visible though anxiously concealed marks of disgust and abhorrence, she had followed her this morning, and with the keenest regret found her doubts verified.

The superiority of sound principles is never more apparent than when we are suddenly

suddenly involved in a perplexing situation. Sophia saw the line of duty clearly chalked out, and determined to seize the earliest opportunity to remonstrate with Lady Caroline on the meanness and impropriety of clandestine assignments. She even resolved to assume sufficient courage to declare, that her sense of duty to the earl of Glanville would compel her to discover that Raymond had the audacity to hover round his residence, unless Lady Caroline would plight her honour, that the engagement should either be openly avowed, or immediately renounced. She rose the next morning, determined to seize the first opportunity for a tête-à-tête with her friend, whom she met upon the stairs equipped for a ride, and avowing her intention to breakfast with Miss Randolph, with whom she had some *particular* business. Sophia begged to accompany her; after some little hesitation,

tion, assent was given; and the ladies, mounting their horses, proceeded on their expedition, followed by one attendant.

We may suppose that the conversation was peculiarly interesting, since it consisted in a mutual attack and defence of each other's admirer. Sophia frankly confessed her esteem for Lord Selborne, acknowledged that she considered him in the light of a lover, and owned how far her preference was sanctioned by Mr. Brudenell's approbation. She also protested, that if the narrative which Lady Caroline had just repeated proved to be true, her esteem would disappear with the imaginary excellence on which it was founded, and be succeeded by abhorrence. Lady Caroline's morning visit to Miss Randolph was intended to ascertain the credibility of these suspicions; and she observed, that as Mr. Raymond advised her to go, the guilt
of

of defamation could not rest with *him*. Sophia was too much agitated with the fear that her emotions during this discussion would betray her secret preference to Miss Randolph, to make her attack on Lady Caroline with the intended spirit and address; and Lady Caroline, gathering more self-command from the timidity of her assailant, coolly replied, that she believed herself equal to the task of guarding her own fame, since her sense of honour was as exalted, and her discrimination of right and wrong as *clear*, as if derived from Mr. Brudenell's system of morals. At this instant two masked soldiers darted from the wood by the side of which they were riding, and, seizing the bridle of Lady Caroline's horse, desired her to deliver her money. Sophia's horse, taking fright at the confusion this assault occasioned, ran away with her; and the terrified rider, unable to check its impetuosity,

petuosity, at length exhausted by terror and fatigue, fell senseless upon the ground. Some labourers who were at work in the adjoining field hurried to her assistance; in a little time her recollection returned; and it was discovered, that her arm was fractured by the fall; but, notwithstanding the torture arising from the accident, her first care was to dispatch immediate assistance to rescue Lady Caroline from her perilous situation. Neither her ladyship nor her horse could be found; but the groom who attended them was discovered about a hundred yards from the spot where the ruffians attacked the ladies, bound hand and foot to a tree, and his horse grazing at a little distance. The honest countrymen remarked on its being a little extraordinary that he did not cry out for help, especially when they came in sight; but John informed them, that he had been stunned by the blows he had received,

received, and only recovered his senses the moment they came to him. He could give very little account of the transaction; he saw his lady seized, and clapped spurs to his horse to protect her; but in an instant he felt a violent blow across his head from behind him, and, after an ineffectual struggle with two more villains, was dragged from his horse and beat in a most cruel manner, till he lost all recollection. Never did any man by his own account fight so manfully, and yet he escaped unwounded. His clothes were, indeed, plentifully besmeared with blood; but, as no one could discover whence it issued, he was forced to refer it to his opponents. The peasants now urged him to rise and join in the pursuit of his lady; but he was too stiff with bruises to be able to stir; and he also told them, that as the earl would certainly be displeased with any measures that

that were taken without *his* permission, the wisest method would be to carry him to Glanville castle, inform his lordship of the alarming catastrophe, and solicit his instructions.

Though the first impulses of plain simplicity are generally right, it is easily led by craft to adopt a scheme that appears to be the result of superior sagacity. They allowed that the earl of Glanville was a gentleman whom nobody knew how to deal with; that they might affront him by attempting to serve his daughter without leave; and that it was the wisest way to leave her to depend on the mercy of her ravishers, and conduct John home to bear witness that they had no hand in the plot. Notwithstanding her fractured limb, Sophia reached the castle an hour before the groom; and though her account led the earl to conclude that they were common foot-pads who had assaulted his

his

his daughter, yet his anxiety and surprise at her absence increased every moment. Destitute of that self-command which results from a just estimate of human life, he paced his chamber in all the agony of terror and irresolution, meditating on the insult that had been offered to the blood of Glanville, till the groom arrived, whose account of this transaction aggravated his feelings to frenzy, and rendered him utterly incapable of issuing any orders.

Glanville-castle was now a scene of the utmost confusion. A few of the servants were engaged in the necessary offices which Sophia's situation required; but, as she made very little complaint, it was agreed that her hurt was of small consequence. Mrs. Chenille was in hysterics at the loss of her lady; and as poor John made the house re-echo with his groans, he of course greatly increased the general consternation. The surgeon
had

had indeed declared that he could not discover the smallest injury, and by a significant shake of the head plainly indicated that he believed him to be a cheat; but as John affirmed that his were all inward bruises, the good-natured housekeeper, who had a strong faith in non-descript complaints, and a great contempt for the faculty, thought of nothing but proving the efficacy of a certain nostrum, as famous in her own family as the celebrated medicine of cheese, wine, and flour, that Hecamede presented to the wounded Machaon. "What's a broken bone or two?" said good Mrs. Brown in the height of her philanthropy. "The doctors may see them, and put them together again; but when you come to inward ails, which are all *guess* work, old women are better than any doctors in the kingdom."

The remaining part of Lord Glanville's household dispersed various ways
in

in search of Lady Caroline; but the time and distance which the ruffians had gained excluded every reasonable prospect of success. Evening came on, and neither the lady nor her pursuers returned. Sophia had some strong symptoms of fever; and Lord Glanville, exhausted by rage and grief, had sunk into a gloomy torpor. At this instant the arrival of Lord Selborne diffused a momentary joy. On receiving the first intelligence of this dreadful event, he had dispatched his company to join in the hue and cry, and hastened himself to the castle, no less concerned for the situation of the sufferers, than perplexed at such an unusual and mysterious occurrence. His first care was, to question the servant, and try if his evidence could throw light upon the affair. By this time John was so amazingly recovered, as to bear almost miraculous attestation of Mrs. Brown's skill in the
healing

healing art, being not only in excellent spirits, but enabled to move with great alacrity; to which last event a bottle of Madeira, which is also a fine thing for inward bruises, probably contributed. His testimony, however, only served to increase Lord Selborne's doubts, as it amounted to nothing more than that the ruffians were not only soldiers, but that they attacked him with fixed bayonets. On being interrogated more closely, John, who found his valour considerably increased by the warm positions that he had swallowed, told his lordship that he (Lord Selborne) most likely *knew* more of the business than he did. Selborne started at the impertinent remark, and perceived with astonishment that it was not only *understood* but *relished* by the auditors.

Meditating how to act in such extraordinary circumstances, he requested
 9 permission

permission to speak to Miss Herbert. Sophia was seriously indisposed : her apprehensions for her friend increased her bodily sufferings ; and it was only by short broken sentences that she could recapitulate what she knew of the disastrous event. Her account, however, confirmed his lordship's suspicions that the whole affair was a conspiracy, that the groom was an accomplice, and that there was a most nefarious design of involving him in the guilt of the attempt. Indignant at such an abominable scheme, anxious for his own reputation, and full of tenderness and sympathy for Sophia's undeserved suffering ; Selborne next requested to speak to Lord Glanville, with an intention of declaring his resolution of returning immediately to W——, and commencing the most minute scrutiny into the conduct of the military under his command. At this instant the noise of a carriage was heard,

and a general burst of joy announced that Lady Caroline was returned.

Impelled by a sudden start of natural affection, Lord Glanville rushed to the door to embrace his daughter ; but his arms dropped from her neck when, with a look of triumph, she bade him *also* welcome her deliverer. The earl at that instant saw Raymond, and all his raptures were suddenly chilled. A cold bow, and a still colder acknowledgment of obligation, was all the return the knight-errant received. Raymond started, no less confused at this reception than at the unexpected appearance of Selborne, on whom he darted a glance full of desperate malignity ; while Selborne fixed his eyes on Raymond's countenance with a look of cool but steadfast displeasure.

Lady Caroline was the first who broke silence. " If I am welcome home," said she to Raymond, " you,

sir, are also welcome. It is to your courage, to your persevering intrepidity that I owe my preservation from the most unlicensed outrage, the most unprincipled brutality. I leave you to narrate the particulars of my rescue, though I am persuaded that your modesty will not do sufficient justice to your merit. My agitated spirits will not permit me to say more at present, except that you have now an *eternal* claim upon my gratitude, and that I will reward you."

As Lady Caroline gave Raymond her hand at the conclusion of this speech, of course he received it upon his knees, and, pressing it to his lips, vowed eternal transport, obligation, respect, and love. Lord Glanville, during this scene, stood petrified with horror, sometimes inclined to ascribe his daughter's conduct to mental derangement, sometimes wishing that she had continued lost rather

ther than thus found, and sometimes debating whether he should order up his footmen, to push Orondates out of doors. His consternation increased every moment, especially while Raymond gave an account of his own part in this adventure, which was unlike any thing that has happened since Falstaff's achievements on Gad's hill. Like the fat knight, he had "men in Kendal green," and men in "Dowlas" to attack, nor could he, like his coadjutor the groom, boast that he returned *unwounded* from the rencounter. He certainly appeared like one "escaped from ruthless fight." One arm was in a sling; he had a black patch across his forehead, and a lame leg; all indisputable signs of persevering valour.

There were, however, some particulars omitted in his account, that would have greatly impeached the probability

of the narration ; and those which he did supply had much more of the *marvellous* than of the *satisfactory*. For he *happened* to be standing at the door of a cottage, at the other side of the wood into which the ruffians dragged Lady Caroline ; and, what was perhaps still more surprising, after he had rescued her, and she had a little recovered from her alarm, an empty chaise and four drove by this *secluded* spot, most opportunely to convey her home. To be sure, at first, owing to the ignorance of the driver, they took a wrong road, and were driving *from*, instead of *to* Glanville-castle ; but a party of Lord Selborne's military put them right, and escorted her ladyship home in triumph. Lord Selborne's impertinent inquiries drew out some of these particulars ; but Mr. Raymond soon grew fullen, and complained that his services demanded commendation rather than suspicious alterca-

altercation. Selborne then hinted that a rescue would not be difficult, if the rescuer had previously assisted in projecting the seizure; and Raymond replied that he would call on his lordship, and explain that point the next morning, and also see whether the examination of his company of soldiers could any ways tend to explain the mystery. Selborne observed, that he should rejoice in having the business clearly investigated. Raymond, with a fierce look, answered, that when a gentleman's honour was implicated, there was but one mode of decision. Selborne added, "Consistent with truth and justice; I agree with you." He then bowed and withdrew.

No situation can be more painful than that of a proud man who believes that he has been obliged by a person whom he both fears and hates. Lord

Glanville had now taken his resolution ; and he therefore thought proper to make some precise formal acknowledgments to Raymond. He asked him if it were in his power to do him any service ; he inquired what mode of life he would prefer, and without waiting for an answer, endeavoured to divert the conversation, by observing how awkwardly he now stood with administration. Raymond turned upon his heel, and declared his intention of calling upon Lady Caroline the next morning, after he should have paid his visit to Lord Selborne. The earl rang the bell, and very politely *bowed* his guest out of the room.

Full of indignation at the insult which had been offered to his family, and no less incensed at being reduced to hear a man like Raymond acknowledge his confidence in Lady Caroline's favour, the earl sent for his daughter, determined

mined to make her lofty spirit feel the power of paternal controul. She came at his summons, and readily acquainted him with every particular of her rescue and escape; not one incident of which appeared extraordinary to her, for she was familiarized to foreign manners, versed in the narratives of German marauders and Italian banditti; and, of course, she formed her idea of the behaviour of English footpads by those models. She declared herself ignorant of the persons by whom she was seized, but that they wore masks, were dressed in regimentals, and frequently repeated the name of Selborne. On being first attacked, she delivered her purse and watch; but on their seeming dissatisfied, and dragging her into the wood, she supposed that, displeased at the smallness of her treasure, they intended to murder her; and, being perfectly careless about life, she formed a resolution

to die with heroism. While they continued to drag her through the most unfrequented, intricate part of the forest, she repeatedly conjured them to end her misery, till at length they issued with her from the covert on the side next the moors; and her expectation of immediate death now yielded to more horrid apprehensions. At this instant she saw a shepherd's cottage, and Raymond walking before the door. She called him to assist her; he knew her voice, flew upon the villains, a dreadful conflict ensued, and she was at liberty.

"I was too much exhausted," continued she, "to return home immediately; but, with a tenderness equal to his courage, Raymond conducted me to the cottage, where a little tranquillity, and some exquisite refreshments, restored my strength; and, after some accidental delay, through mistaking the right road, he conducted me home in safety. Too
noble

noble to impose any conditions, too generous to express the sentiments that he long has felt, while my agitated mind was incapable of clear judgment, it is *our* duty to give him an adequate and noble reward."

"Your notions, Caroline," returned his lordship, gradually relaxing his contracted brows into an *amiable* smile, "are frank and liberal. Gratitude is an hereditary virtue in the house of Glanville; and no one can accuse me of degenerating from my ancestors. However highly this young man rates his services, he shall find my *bounty* exceed his expectations."

"Does your lordship mean," replied Lady Caroline in a high tone of voice, "to wound the feelings of a gentleman by the offer of your purse? Such treatment might be proper to a mechanic, but not to a man of birth equal to your own, and only in fortune your inferior.

We have long seemed to misunderstand each other; explicitness now becomes us both. Raymond has preserved my life and honour, and *I* will reward him."

"Are you mad, Caroline?" interrupted the earl in a still higher key than the lady had used. "Do you intend to bestow yourself upon a beggar? a man destitute of character and fortune?"

"I can give him fortune," resumed her ladyship, with a Sardonic smile; "and as to character, I have heard you observe, that nothing can be so indefinite as a person's reputation. People see the same object through different mediums. I have neither the means nor wish to correct the defects in your lordship's vision; and you must pardon me, if, on this occasion, I determine to act according to my own conviction. My soul is superior to the prejudices of society. My own heart is the monitor

tor to which I listen, and its fiat shall decide."

"Ungrateful girl!" the agitated father was inclined to exclaim, "is this my reward?" But the haughty indifference his daughter's countenance, who seemed prepared for the keenest retorts, induced him again to recollect himself, and change his style for one better adapted to her character. He acknowledged the obligations they owed to Raymond, but doubted of the propriety of her hastily adopting such a strong resolution in his favour. He spoke of the ridicule and mortifications that she must encounter, if the romance terminated in a precipitate marriage. He spoke also of the *inconveniencies* of a narrow fortune, of the neglect of former acquaintance, and of the mean subterfuges to which titled poverty is compelled to have recourse, in order to avoid open contempt. These reflections struck

Lady Caroline, especially as they were accompanied by an assurance that he had no personal objection to Raymond, and no latent views in opposing her wishes, but what proceeded from fond regard.

“Let me,” said he, “guard your too susceptible and generous mind from the effects of a sudden impulse. Only reflect upon the step that you are going to take before you offer yourself a victim on the altar of gratitude. Above all do not, by an elopement from your father’s house, give the world cause to arraign your discretion. If Mr. Raymond’s merits can preponderate against the inconveniencies that must result from your union with him, remember your choice is free, and call upon me to confirm it.”

While the earl uttered this speech, Lady Caroline looked up with astonishment.—“Surely,” thought she, “a meta-

metamorphosis has taken place, and it is Brudenell who addresses me in this frank, benevolent, instructive language."

She caught her father's hand; he drew her to him; and, as he imprinted a kiss upon her cheek, he wetted it with a tear. Overcome by this unusual mark of *real* affection, a glow of filial duty warmed Lady Caroline's heart; she sunk involuntarily upon her knee, and promised to observe his counsels.

CHAP. XX.

Love in Heroics, and Virtue mounted on the high Stilts of Philosophy, run away together.

THE reader's surprize at the scene which concluded the last chapter will abate, when he considers that, as Lady Caroline's vehemence had thrown the earl too much off his guard, by making him avow his dislike of Raymond, with very frank, unequivocal, and in his own opinion, dangerous sincerity, a little deeper finesse became expedient; for, though the plain man, who treads surely in the straight path of integrity, is only grieved by finding that he has committed an *intentional* fault, these perfect masters of the

the science of human nature, as professed dissemblers affect to style themselves, are always willing to give up their *veracity*, to preserve the reputation of their *judgment*.

The remarks of Lord Selborne upon Raymond's narrative had convinced Lord Glanville, that the pretended rescue was only a scene in a deep laid plan, of most complicated treachery, which, though in some respects frustrated, might still ensnare an unwary and romantic girl in the dangerous maze of obligation and gratitude. I trust most fathers would have deemed it adviseable to have communicated these suspicions to their daughters, and would have pointed out the necessity of the most circumspect conduct till every doubt was cleared. But, as this would have been abridging the liberty of a free independent being, and forcing his doubts upon an uncontaminated mind, the earl thought it
would

would better accord with his very enlightened character, to have recourse to a counter-plot, to defeat the effect of those services which he appeared to admit in their fullest extent. As this project would be defeated by Lady Caroline's suspecting him to be capable of forming it, he was of course obliged to dress up his design in the neatest disguise of candour, liberality, and parental affection.

Lady Caroline found her father in a still more generous humour the next morning. He was impatient for Raymond's visit, hoping that he would behave with frankness, and desirous to have some plan pointed out by which he might serve him, and lay the foundation of a future friendship. He alluded to the high words that had passed between him and Lord Selborne, and expressed his hope that Caroline's extraordinary adventure might not involve her

her deliverer in any embarrassing predicament. Lady Caroline doubted to what all this placidity would tend, and flew to Sophia to recount the amazing change which had taken place in her father's mind.—“If he really treats me,” said she, “with the candour and ingenuousness that he affects, even you Sophy shall not exceed me in the practice of filial affection; but if he deceives me——”

“Ah!” replied Sophia, in a tremulous voice, “if he does, would you then undo yourself, in order to be revenged? Dearest Caroline, fix your virtues on a firmer basis than the stability of a fellow-mortal. Act rightly yourself, and beware of measuring your own actions by the false standard of another's faults.”

Another day passed on, and Raymond and Selborne were alike strangers at Glanville castle. Several messages, indeed, passed between the latter and the

the earl; but the ladies were informed that they were only civil inquiries after the health of the family. On the evening of the second day, Mrs. Chenille presented her lady with a letter from Mr. Raymond, which too well accounted for his absence. Not to dwell on minute particulars, the finances of that gentleman were in so deranged a state, that it became very easy for Lord Glanville to get him laid in durance; while, by one of those masterly turns on which his lordship particularly piqued himself, the disgrace of stimulating a resentful creditor to this action was heaped upon Lord Selborne, who was stated to have had recourse to this mean measure, in order to excuse himself from answering Raymond's allegation that he had been the contriver of the attack upon Lady Caroline, as well as to screen himself from the consequences of his resentment. The arrest took place the very morning

morning after Raymond had sent Selborne a challenge; the young viscount was seen conversing with a sheriff's officer, and Raymond was inticed from his lodgings, and prevailed upon to walk in a field where the writ was served upon him, by a person in Selborne's confidence. Added to these circumstances, one of the bailiffs confessed that his client had been induced to execute the writ, by a neighbouring nobleman's having assured him that the debtor was able to discharge every demand. All this amounted to what Raymond, in his letter to Lady Caroline, pronounced the most positive proof of Selborne's baseness, cowardice, cruelty, and detestable treachery.

He also observed, that the time chosen to overwhelm him by this horrible conspiracy was the most unpropitious to himself that malice could have selected; for, by a strange combination of circumstances,

stances, Lord Phantome was gone upon a tour, and he knew not where he could be found. The marquis of Lethe found his recollection of Raymond's past services overwhelmed by the innumerable applications of less worthy but more importunate petitioners. Sir Titup Cantwell had forfeited his word, and old Scapegrace, who had quarrelled with his housekeeper, was but just making him distant overtures of reconciliation. These he was conscious would terminate in his being acknowledged the heir to all his fortunes; but prudence never would authorize him to appear before a miser in the character of an insolvent, to which parsimony always annexed the accusation of thoughtless extravagance.

“I am utterly ruined,” continued Raymond; “but I glory in the miseries that proceed from the immutable conceptions I have formed of truth, justice, patriotism, and generous disregard of all interested

interested views. Honour now bids me conceal those actions which are a secret solace to my griefs, or I would tell Selborne what brought me to the cottage of virtuous poverty, and enabled me to rescue the most exalted of women from his mercenary banditti. I could tell him, that the chaise, which served to assist that loveliest paragon of excellence, whom his pestiferous breath was just going to blast, was returning from placing two children of affliction, whom it would better have become him to protect, in peace and in innocence. My improvident generosity tempted me to a premature expenditure of a younger brother's *scanty* portion; but it is gone, spent in deeds that cold-blooded villany knows not how to perform.

“ O Lady Caroline! I shall lay down my pen, and soon betake me to the wretch's last hope. Yet suffer me to muse one moment on the flattering visions

sions that soothed my soul when I snatched you from the ruffians' grasp. Suffer me to recall your image, when, in the presence of your imperious father, you gave me your hand, and with it an assurance that your heart should do me justice. I here release you from that promise. Your fortunes never must be blended with those of the *dishonoured* Raymond. By all my miseries I swear, I would not draw the bright empress of my soul from the radiant sphere which she illumines, and extinguish her beams in the night of my calamity. Be you most blessed, most happy, rich in universal admiration, crowned with perpetual prosperity, the idol of exalted spirits, the delight of the whole world. I only urge two requests. Promise me never to plight your nuptial faith to the execrable Selborne; and, when my woes and wrongs are deposited in the *cold* grave, let your gentle bosom

heave *one* sigh for him who adored you, as he would the visible deity of beauty and truth."

There was a vast deal more in the same style; but, conceiving this specimen sufficient, I close the quotation. The conclusion, however, was important. He stated, that he was now freed from the talons of those harpies who call themselves agents of the law; but that, as he felt himself indelibly *contaminated* by their touch, he was determined to apply to a sovereign specific for shame and sorrow: this bloody-minded paragraph terminated with *three* dearests, and *five* farewells.

I request every tender-hearted lady who honours these pages with a perusal, and is a little gifted with the female grace of sensibility, to tell me how it was possible for Lady Caroline to resist this letter. Being informed by Chenille that Raymond's servant, when he delivered

livered it, reluctantly owned that he had charged his master's pistols before he left him, though he had afterward promised not to use them till his return from Glanville-castle, she again looked over this tragic rant. The secret messages between Selborne and her father convinced her that the latter was at least an active agent in the conspiracy, and she formed her resolution the moment that suggestion flashed upon her mind. Her hand trembled too much to write a long answer; but her note, though laconic, was perfectly satisfactory; as it contained a request that he would bring a chaise and four to the park gate at twelve that night, and, instead of dying, prepare to meet a faithful partner, who was resolved to show him that there was one exception to the general ingratitude, depravity, and treachery of the world.

Leaving Chenille to pack up her jewels and valuables, Lady Caroline now repaired to Sophia's apartment, who was still too much indisposed to leave her chamber. To her Lady Caroline confided Raymond's dolorous complaints; and, being exactly in the situation in which most people are when they ask advice, she requested Sophia to tell her what to do. Sophia was too much interested by the accusations urged against her own lover, to pay an immediate attention to her friend's request. Selborne a coward! a treacherous villain! the contriver of Raymond's arrest! the author of the assault on Lady Caroline! Impossible! What could his views be? Is it consistent with human nature, for a man who has always acted with most amiable uprightness, *suddenly* to become a dark and hardened conspirator? 'Tis true, they who talk much of virtue sometimes fail in the practice;

but Selborne, far from running into the sentimental cant, seemed too careless to attempt to bring his virtues into observation. You heard of his good deeds from others; you always met him in the path of unassuming duty; you constantly saw him acting and speaking as he ought; and yet he seemed to consider this undeviating propriety too much a thing of course to be worth talking about. Every rule that Mr. Brudenell had laid down to assist her in estimating the moral qualities of others, induced her to give the amiable Selborne the noble commendation of meaning right and acting well; and the unsupported accusations of *a Raymond* ought not to induce her to change her opinion.

After vindicating Lord Selborne with a warmth that made Lady Caroline pity the blind credulity of love, Sophia recollected that she was called upon to act

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as a counsellor upon this momentous occasion, and she advised her friend to shew this letter to her father. "No," said Lady Caroline, delivering her the paper with a very heroic air, "be yours that office. To you I depute the task of vindicating my conduct, and defending my fame. Tell Lord Glanville, that his daughter has been just, *sincere*, generous, and add, if you dare, that she advises him to imitate those virtues."

"What do you mean?" cried the terrified Sophia, feebly attempting to detain Lady Caroline. "What is it you propose?"

"To quit for ever," returned the other, "this den of tyranny, this labyrinth of guile. O Sophy, I have this instant had all my suspicions of Lord Glanville's treachery *cruelly* confirmed. Your generous noble heart will revolt at the recital. Selborne is not the *only* nobleman who conspired against Ray-

mond's freedom. I have made old Jervais own, that his master knew of the arrest, nay that a messenger was privately dispatched to the creditor who had taken out a writ against him the very evening my brave deliverer rescued me from dishonour and death; the evening too on which all my suspicions were lulled asleep by the designing caresses of a father shall I say, or of a designing sycophant? If you doubt my assertions, I will name to you the person who travelled all night upon this business. Now, Sophy, will you still talk to me of duty to such a father?"

"If his lordship acted thus," returned Sophia, "he is certainly highly culpable. But as his plan is defeated, as Mr. Raymond is again at liberty, surely his mortification at an unavailing piece of treachery will be its own punishment. But do explain what you mean to do?"

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"I do

“ I do *not* mean to shew the earl this letter,” said Caroline significantly.

“ On cooler reflection,” returned Sophia, “ I think it would be wrong to put Mr. Raymond into the power of his persecutors ; for his behaviour to you unquestionably deserves a grateful acknowledgment. My purse is not very weighty, but perhaps, Caroline, it may add a little to the contents of yours ; and a gentleman in his predicament may require—I mean might not be violently hurt, if you were to preface your present with some handsome compliment.”

“ No,” said Lady Caroline with great composure, “ I need not tax your friendship, Sophy. I have enough to carry us to London ; and, as soon as I am married, I know my guardians will resign their trust of my grandfather’s fortune.”

“To London!” exclaimed Sophia with painful eagerness. “O Caroline! are you going to put yourself wholly in the power of a man of whom you know so little, and that little not *quite* to his advantage?”

“I know,” resumed the fair enthusiast, “that I owe him an obligation, that he has suffered upon my account, and that my friends have treated him with cruelty. Do you draw the conclusion, and tell me what I ought to do.”

“I will,” said Sophia; “and may your better judgment correct the error of your first resolve. May not an obligation, such as we all owe to a fellow-creature in distress, be repaid by something short of the sacrifice of all your future prospects? Have you not ample power to remunerate Mr. Raymond, for the transient trouble and disgrace that he has incurred, not *wholly* upon
your

your account, but certainly in part by his own want of prudence and œconomy? And can you in no other way convince him that you do not approve of Lord Glanville's certainly ungrateful conduct, but by shewing him that you will for his sake renounce every consideration that you owe to filial duty, to your own welfare, and to the opinion of the world?"

"You must not talk of filial duty," said Lady Caroline, interrupting her friend with a disdainful smile, "since I never acknowledge that the *accidental* circumstance of primogeniture confers an *arbitrary* necessity of obedience. I have heard your arguments; now listen to my resolves. I mean to bestow myself and my fortune on Mr. Raymond. By the liberality of this action I shall bind his generous mind to eternal gratitude; and I shall shew the man whom I despise, how weak and futile are all his schemes.

Lord Lewson's bequest is adequate to all my wants. The scenes that I witnessed abroad have taught me to spurn the adventitious importance that is derived from wealth and rank, and to fix real greatness in the inherent qualities of the soul. True to my own rules of conduct, I yield you, Sophia, the full possession of the Glanville estate. The law recognizes your just title to it ; but I, who judge from something beyond the legal letter, acknowledge your claims of right, as originating from deeds that I deem of higher validity than the quaint terms of conveyances and records. Had you been less worthy I might have been tortured by mean regret ; but I know that the inheritance which I considered as my birth-right will devolve on one who *deserves* it ; and I resign it without a sigh."

" Generous woman !" replied Sophia, bursting into tears ; " let me intreat you
for

for your own sake—consider to what your rash preference of Raymond exposes you.”

“The die is cast,” returned Lady Caroline; “the time is fixed for my departure; and if your intreaties cannot detain me, be assured force will be of no avail. If Lord Glanville pursues me, I will either assert my natural rights or perish in the attempt. But mark, Sophia, I am not the mere dupe of love, a drivelling girl who flies off with an adventurer. No, I am guided by superior motives. I prove my enlarged conception of moral fitness; I expose duplicity, I humble tyranny, I obey the call of honour. I must, I shall be happy; for happiness is seated in the soul, and the soul exults when we perform high deeds of heroic worth. Justice, the cardinal virtue of our unsophisticated nature, bids me torture the proud mean earl of Glanville; it prompts me to

detect his craft, to triumph in his defeat——”

“ Oh!” said Sophia, “ for heaven’s sake ! think more of your own prospects than of revenge against your father. Is not Mr. Raymond a spendthrift and an unsettled character ? I would not offend you, dear Lady Caroline ; but do consider, are his principles well spoken of ? ”

“ Not by those who hate and persecute him, I grant ; but, even supposing him to be what you have heard him described, the noble liberality of my behaviour must secure his eternal gratitude ; and I shall at least have the satisfaction of living with a man who owes to me both his life and fortune.”

“ If he has a bad heart,” answered Sophia, “ that recollection will only prompt him to treat you with unkindness ; nay, perhaps to reproach you with that preference which he may be base enough to call indiscretion.”

“ You

“ You had better direct these scrupulous observations to Selborne’s character,” returned Lady Caroline. “ Remember, if I suffer for my folly, the misery will be all my own.”

“ No,” said Sophia with a look of affecting tenderness ; “ I would dissuade, but I perceive I only incense you. Go then, dearest Caroline ; and, if my warm wishes can prevail, you will always think me uncandid and illiberal in these my premonitory warnings. But if, which heaven forbid ! you should ever want a friend ; if, injured where you have placed implicit trust, the anguish of your heart should remind you of this conversation, remember these arms that would have held you back, will always be ready to embrace you, and to give you a *sister’s* share of all that I possess.”

“ I thank you,” returned Lady Caroline ; “ and in return hear my parting adjuration. Never put any confidence

in Lord Glanville, and do not marry Selborne till he is cleared from these dishonourable imputations. Your hand, Sophia; I now put your friendship to the proof. If your high notions of duty should induce you to apprise the family of my flight, my adventures will have a tragical termination. To-morrow morning you are at liberty to act as you please."

"Will you not be prevailed upon?" said Sophia all bathed in tears. "O undone Caroline! O generous, but greatly erring friend!" The amiable girl continued to give way to the impulse of unavailing grief, while Lady Caroline, glorying in her sublime energies, and attended by Chenille, gained the park-gate unperceived by any of the family.

I am not sure whether I should not here introduce a few popular embellishments. Suppose the lady, on stepping into the high road, were to meet
a tall,

a tall, flitting, loose-robed spectre, whose pallid features, indistinct groans, and blood-stained vesture should convince her that Raymond had done "the bloody deed." Or suppose that at the moment when the wretched lover was priming his pistols, Lady Caroline was to pop upon him with a "Stop! I am come." Or suppose, like Romeo, forgetting that he had killed himself, he should get into the post-chaise as if nothing had happened.—Instead of hobgoblins or wonders, Mr. Raymond stood at the parkgate, waiting for the fair one's arrival, and not much afraid of being obliged to have recourse to "lovely amiable death." The lady met him without saying that she was astonished to find him alive; and he so far forgot the *contamination* he had suffered from the vile bailiffs, that he not only handed her into the chaise, but seated himself by her side.

sider. "The barbs" flew apparently as fast as Leonora's; and for the first twenty miles the gentleman was all gratitude and rapture. But rapture cannot last for ever, and gratitude is apt to cool. I have heard that from the fatigue of a rapid journey, the apprehensions of pursuit, and the cross incidents that happen upon the road, the Hymeneal Vulcan sometimes sees as sombrous looking suppliants approach his altar, as those pitiable victims of prejudice, and slaves to routine, who walk hand in hand to the village church, at the head of a dull procession of parents and kindred, and return home, amidst the clamour of bells, to eat bride cake, and be comfortable.

Since the dear love of adventure seduces many a "Lydia Languish," to meet poor "frozen Beverley" in the garden, who might as well have been sitting

sitting at the parlour fire; and to steal down a ladder of ropes, when the street-door would have stood wide open; I wish to persuade all boarding-school misses, that the pleasure of adventure, like most other pleasures, ceases the very moment it is enjoyed. When all the perils of pursuits and “hair-breadth escapes” are over; when, after a rapid race to Gretna-green, Strephon with Delia at his side returns leisurely home again; at least when the newspapers have done announcing that “the beautiful daughter of a gentleman of great respectability lately *jumped* from a one pair of stairs window, *scaled* the parapet wall of her father’s laundry, scrambled over the ha-ha, *waded* through the canal, and after a thousand dangers from highway-men, footpads, gypsies, constables, and justices of the peace, happily joined the gallant and accomplished ensign Bluster, with whom she immediately set out on

a connubial expedition to “that happy land where *marriage still is free* :”—I say when all this is over, love drops his brocaded suit of romance, and buckles on the plain camblet of common life. Woe be to the wedded pair should they then perceive that the desire for the undertaking arose from the difficulty of its being accomplished ! No brave contempt of parental sanctions, no generous defiance of maiden delicacy, no patient endurance of supererogatory dangers, will snap those *galling fetters*, which their bewildered fancies mistook for the *silken cords of love*.—I was proceeding in this strain of advice to the misses of the present day, till, recollecting that the increased depravity of morals has sanctioned such frequent breaches of the marriage vow as to make it considered rather as the loose cincture of accommodation and convenience, than

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as a holy indissoluble obligation, I blush for the licentious degradation of the *matronly* character, and refrain from satirizing the levities of youthful temerity.

CHAP. XXI.

Love in common Life, and Virtue in an old-fashioned Attire, agree that it is best to try to be contented.

WE left Lady Caroline, in the last Chapter, performing, according to her own opinion, the most exalted act of which a human being is capable; namely, avowing her contempt of opinions, prejudices, customs, and laws; of course, as success crowned her efforts, she *inevitably* became very happy.

Poor Sophia meantime remained as wretched as a mean timid slave of duty and prescription can possibly be; for she certainly felt as uncomfortable as a person ever is, who continues conscious
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that they have faithfully endeavoured to act as they ought. Lady Caroline's threats had intimidated her from alarming the family ; but the fearful apprehensions of the dreadful scenes that would follow the elopement racked her bosom with doubt and terror. I do not mean doubt how she herself was to act ; for, being free from that species of moral chemistry which rarefies, distills, evaporates, and compounds virtues, till they change their natures and become vices ; she *clearly* discerned the line of her *own* duty, and fancied that it consisted in an endeavour to mitigate Lord Glanville's distress, and to reconcile him to his daughter.

Full of this idea, she determined to exert her strength to the utmost, and, in spite of pain and languor, to visit him in his chamber, and break the sad tidings with the utmost caution and gentleness. She had naturally wished for
Mr.

Mr. Brudenell's counsel and support, and she regretted that the effects of her accident prevented her from writing to him for his direction at this awful emergency. A mind properly disposed as to the events of this life is never guilty of discontent : mild regrets and humble wishes are all that it presumes to oppose to those unfavourable events which Divine Providence often brings to pass, as well to accomplish its immense plan of universal superintendence, as to try and prove the defective virtue of finite man. Sophia recollected that it was not her own fault that she was now deprived of the assistance of her dearest and best friend ; " He," said she, " is faithfully discharging the sacred duties of his function ; I will hope that I shall be supported in this hour of trial, as I do not rely on my own strength, but with sincerity of intention, and humility of judgment, resolve to do the best I can."

Issuing

Issuing from her chamber in this pious frame of mind, she beheld with rapture the venerable man advancing towards her, and in a moment found herself locked in his embraces. Mr. Brudenell had been informed by Lord Selborne of the circumstances attending Sophia's accident, and he travelled all night, no less from the hope that he might render some essential services to Lord Glanville and his daughter, than through anxiety for the safety of his beloved Sophy.

Mr. Brudenell listened to Sophia's account of Lady Caroline's rash conduct. That turn of mind which so admirably corresponded with his sacred profession, led him to point out to his attentive grand-daughter the just dealings of the Divine Ruler of the universe. "In vain," said he, "do infidels deny his existence; he compels them to *feel* his power. They go on triumphantly in their sinful course, ignorant that they
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are only accomplishing the views of Him, who causes the wicked to fall into the snare which their own hands have prepared. By subtlety, deceit, and dishonest plans, Lord Glanville has lost his daughter, and most keenly wounded his own pride; while she, indulging her humour of blind obstinacy and mad revenge, has blasted the blossoms of her youthful hope, and condemned her future life to disappointment, chagrin, and vain remorse. These will probably be her companions for many years after her hated father, whom she wished to mortify and perplex, has escaped from the wrath of man, to witness the righteousness of God."

They now began to talk of the part that Lord Selborne had acted in this business; and Mr. Brudenell observed, that the accusations which Raymond had brought against him had scarcely face enough to merit inquiry. Yet,

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as precipitate judgment is wrong, even in its hasty efforts to vindicate a virtuous character from opprobrium, he thought it would be adviseable to wait the effect of time; especially as Selborne's absenting himself from the castle, when his presence and services might be of use to the family, had a singular aspect.

The intelligence of Lady Caroline's elopement threw Lord Glanville into a paroxysm of rage, that mocked every attempt at consolation. He execrated her ingratitude, in terms very inapplicable to an enlightened philosopher; and when he wished her poverty, infamy, and remorse, he tacitly admitted the force of principles that he had during his whole life denied. So powerfully did his mental anguish agitate his weak frame, that it was at first thought his life would fall a sacrifice to the keen emotions of wounded pride, and the "compunctive visitings" of remorse.

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In one of those moments when the mind, by intensely musing on its present regrets, renounces the force of former habits, Lord Glanville formed the resolution of punishing his unworthy daughter, by publishing his own infamy, acknowledging Sophia for his heiress, and uniting her to the nobleman whom he once destined for his son-in-law. The behaviour of Selborne during the late strange occurrences had convinced the earl that he was mistaken in the object of the young viscount's wishes; and various incidents made him suspect that a reciprocal attachment subsisted in Sophia's gentle bosom. Many years had passed since Lord Glanville felt the power of love; and we have already seen that he was but a refractory subject to that generally absolute sovereign. He depended upon the gentleness of Sophia's temper, and the strength of her principles; and imagined that if he could
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but once extort a promise of obedience to his wishes, compliance in all points would necessarily follow. As to any regret for using Lord Selborne ill, the earl was not of a nature to feel the nice compunctions of honour, when self stood in his way. He welcomed him to Glanville-castle, while he fancied his visits promoted his schemes; that hope being frustrated by his daughter's imprudent marriage, he resolved to break off a connexion that would only counteract the extensive designs of aspiring craft, or, if you please, *consummate wisdom*.

Some people may suppose that Lord Glanville had too recently experienced the ill effects of plot and design, to pursue that method of acting; but he held plain dealing in such contempt, that he never chose the ready road even in wickedness. He therefore resolved to *compel* an amiable mind to obedience, by

VOL. II. P stratagem;

stratagem; and to *cheat* an affectionate heart into a renunciation of a preferred lover, by the very action that seemed to bind itself to him for ever.

His languid frame appeared reanimated by this device. He sent for Sophia into his apartment, made many inquiries after Lord Selborne, praised his character, and lamented that he was now wholly engrossed by military affairs. The poet has remarked, that, to an enamoured mind, no music is so sweet as “the praises of the man she loves.” But while Sophia’s cheek flushed with modest joy, the earl suddenly inveighed against Lady Caroline, and called on his granddaughter to reprobate her conduct. Sophia confessed it to be very wrong; but hoped that if Lady Caroline seemed happy in her choice, and requested pardon, he would be induced to forgive her. “Never,” was the earl’s stern answer. “And now, Sophia, may I not expect that
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that what you condemn in another you will yourself avoid? Do you acknowledge that *you* owe me duty, gratitude, affection, and obedience?"

"O, most assuredly," replied Sophia. "I will endeavour to promote your happiness, and to sooth your sorrows!"

"'Tis well," returned his lordship. "Am I to understand this promise as including *obedience* to my will in a matrimonial engagement?"

Sophia paused a moment. She was persuaded that her grandfather was going to propose Lord Selborne for her husband; and, as she felt angry at his not having been to inquire after her since her late dreadful accident, she thought it right to consider whether she could forgive him, before she promised implicit obedience to this demand.

"You hesitate," resumed his lordship; "I thought that with *you* words

and deeds were synonymous." As the storm of anger blackened in his countenance every moment, Sophia did not feel sufficiently courageous to *withstand* his displeasure; but, secretly resolving to shew the young viscount that she could resent negligence, she assured Lord Glanville, that, though she was very happy in her present state, she was ready to obey his wishes.

"You shall find your account in so doing," replied the earl, ringing his bell.

Mr. Brudenell was requested to attend, and the heads of the household were summoned.—"You will take notice," said Lord Glanville, addressing himself chiefly to the steward, "that *this* young lady, whom I intrusted from some private reasons to that gentleman's care, is my grand-daughter, my son's only child, and the lineal issue of my first
and

and lawful marriage. Raymond's wife, whom I called my daughter, is merely the illegitimate offspring of an illegal connexion: I educated and cherished her; and, from despair of recovering my heir, I gave her reason to hope for part of my fortunes. The ingratitude of this woman corresponds with the stigma of her birth, and she deserves the infamy to which I abandon her. You are all witnesses to this my declaration. It is my pleasure, that Miss Glanville's birth should be publicly explained, and that she should be acknowledged as heiress to my fortunes, and mistress of my family."

During this speech, a contrariety of passions agitated Sophia's mind. The satisfaction which must necessarily result from this public restitution of her natural rights, was blended with pity for the repudiated daughter, and horror that the unrepenting sinner thus not

only avowed his crimes, but glossed them over with an air of merit. The flattering commendations that were poured upon herself, and the censures that were lavished upon the fallen Caroline, reminded her of the different aspect which the common herd of characters always present to prosperity and adversity. Ungratified by the hollow praise of venal expectation, she begged Mr. Brudenell to lead her from the painful scene. As she passed by Jervais she perceived that his cheeks were wet with tears. "Good old man," said she, pressing his hand as he opened the door, "you feel that you have lost a friend." Jervais only replied by a low bow, and a sigh for his former lady.

"Am I wrong?" said she to Mr. Brudenell, as soon as they were alone. "Greatly as Lord Glanville has laboured to oblige me, I do not feel obliged. I will certainly faithfully perform all my promises,

promises, I will endeavour to divert his afflictions, I will steadily obey his commands ; but indeed this will not be a labour of love. I shall rejoice when I am liberated from this task. Yes, dear grandpapa," continued she, throwing her arms round Mr. Brudenell's neck, " I should rejoice, even if Selborne appeared less amiable to me, than, if you will not rally me, I confess he does."

" Dear ingenuous girl," replied Mr. Brudenell, " may you have no worse enemy to encounter than my raillery ! But tell me, what have you promised ? and why do you suppose Lord Glanville means to bestow you on Selborne ?"

Sophia then repeated all that had passed between her and the earl, and asked if it was not a fair, nay a necessary inference.

" It appears to be so," said Mr. Brudenell ; " and there is only one objection

to this interpretation. Such conduct is too frank and noble for Lord Glanville."

"Ah!" cried Sophia, "that ever I should call you uncandid. But you do not know the high estimation in which the earl holds Lord Selborne."

"It is not a want of candour," replied Mr. Brudenell, "to draw those inferences which are most natural. If Lord Glanville seemed sensible of his former faults, I should believe he would adopt the plan most likely to give repose to his old age, by endeavouring to render you happy. But while he can at once recollect the enormous offences of his youth; and yet not only resolve on a total renunciation of his daughter for a less fault, but even gild and polish his own crimes, nay convert them into wise and noble actions:—O Sophy! is it uncharitable to doubt such a man? But we will endeavour to hope the best, and
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intreat heaven to open his eyes that he may see the error of his ways."

Miss Glanville was going to reply, when she saw Lord Selborne approaching. "Had I not better avoid him?" inquired she in an irresolute tone. Mr. Brudenell bade her only stay till the first civilities were passed, and added that he would endeavour to bring on an *eclaircissement*.

Selborne joined the party in evident confusion. He expressed his regret at not having been able to make personal inquiries after Miss Herbert's health; and added, that they had both been engaged in many unpleasant scenes since they last met. Mr. Brudenell undertook to answer for his grand-daughter; observed, that Lord Selborne's time was always usefully and properly employed; and added, that, as she was still too unwell to bear exertion, she had better return to the house. "Your lordship," said

he, "will perhaps favour me with your company, while I examine the progress of some new improvement which Lord Glanville is making at the bottom of the park." Selborne assented. Sophia withdrew. A degree of mutual trepidation kept the gentlemen silent for a few moments. Mr. Brudenell at last began the conversation with thanking his young friend for sending him such speedy intelligence of Sophia's misfortune.

"I have often," said Selborne, "availed myself of your permission to visit your lovely grand-daughter. In mind and in person, she is to me the most amiable of her sex; nor can I have one idea of future happiness, in which she is not included. I have even hoped that I had made some progress in her good opinion; and I should ere now have ventured on a declaration, had not the artifices of Raymond, and the impru-

imprudence of Lady Caroline, thrown various obstacles in my course. Perhaps, sir, you have heard that my endeavours to withdraw that unfortunate woman from a very imprudent connexion have been so far misconstrued, as to be brought forward in proof of my having had a design upon her person. But my beloved Sophia shall be my justification: I had no reason for disguise. She saw my attentions to her unhappy friend; and I perceived with rapture, that her true greatness of soul led her not only to discern, but to approve the motive of them."

"Certainly," said Mr. Brudenell, casting his eyes upon the ground, with a somewhat mysterious air, "there was some probability that a woman of Lady Caroline's high expectations and personal advantages, might attract a man of your lordship's discernment; and though I am willing to believe that Sophia was

really your choice, yet those who were strangers to your sentiments might think it possible that——”

“How falsely must they judge,” said Selborne impatiently, “who could indeed prefer a vain violent woman to *your* Sophia’s modest graces! Can you imagine that I could have been mean enough, even if I had been ignorant of the state of Lady Caroline’s heart, to hesitate for an instant between immense wealth and certain happiness?”

“I believe,” observed Mr. Brudenell dryly, “that your lordship will have no cause to complain even of pecuniary loss, by your not having run away with Lady Caroline.”

“I have minutely investigated that atrocious calumny,” replied Selborne. “Two of the four villains who were engaged in the business are discovered, and have confessed, not only that Raymond was their employer, but that he
never.

never meant to have brought the lady back to Glanville-castle, had not his full intentions been frustrated by meeting some of my company whom I had dispatched in search of her ; though he had, at the same time, so concerted the enterprize as to implicate me in the disgrace, in case it should fail. I had purposed to have prosecuted these villains for a conspiracy ; but as Lady Caroline has now entirely thrown herself into Raymond's power, farther investigation would not only be useless but imprudent. For her sake, therefore, I purpose to hush up the inquiry."

Mr. Brudenell now adverted to the story of Raymond's arrest, and found, as he suspected, that Lord Glanville was the *sole* contriver of that artifice. Selborne owned that he had received a challenge ; but he also added with that tempered courage which should ever distinguish a Christian soldier, that he had
refused,

refused to accept it. "I wrote him word," said he, "that my military reputation was established; that my King and my country had a right to my life; and that I would not risk it in a private quarrel, with a man whom I knew to be a slanderer; but whom, nevertheless, I had never injured. I added, that if he chose to assault me, I wore a sword, and was not destitute of skill to defend my life from open attacks. As for secret machinations, I trusted in Providence to preserve me from them.

"You must hear me a little farther," continued Lord Selborne, snatching Mr. Brudenell's hand, while a tear of manly feeling trembled in his eye. "I see that you approve of my conduct hitherto in this affair; but spare your commendations, and tell me how I should now act. A few days ago I received notice from the War-office to hold myself in immediate readiness, as the detachment

to which I belong was ordered on foreign service. I have since learned, that it is going on an expedition esteemed necessary to the safety and glory of this empire, but likely to be dangerous and bloody. I must obey the call of my country, Mr. Brudenell; all earthly considerations yield to that obligation; and, as far as relates to myself, I feel that I could willingly resign my life to purchase her security and repose. But tell me, circumstanced as I am, ought I to wish to bind your Sophia in ties which she may afterwards repent? I consider myself as only in possession of a moiety of life; and, if I escape falling in the field of battle, may not I return home maimed and infirm, my health sacrificed to a pestilential climate or extreme fatigue, and my mind crushed by bodily calamities? Ought I to expose your Sophia to the chance of being contracted to disease, misery, or insanity? Should what
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may prove the last important act of my life, be a deed of selfish cruelty to the woman whom I best love? Tell me how I ought to act; I would be disinterested, but not affectedly romantic. I would be just to Sophia, and yet not treacherous to myself."

"The scenes of my early life," said Mr. Brudenell, "have too long passed by to allow me to be a good love-casualist; but I will give you the plain sentiments of an old man. There is a delicacy in your suggestions: if they proceed from a supposition that your own choice is not so fully determined but that future circumstances may change your present sentiments, persevere in your silence to my child; for such hesitation is prudent to yourself, and honourable to her."

"I have told you," replied Selborne impatiently, "that my affections are *invariably* fixed. I will not suppose, sir,
if

if you doubt my word, that you would place confidence in my *protestations*."

"Then," returned Mr. Brudenell, "put at least a possible case, and let that decide your conduct. Suppose you should return in peace, safety, and glory, to your native country, and then find 'your happiest choice already linked and wedlock-bound to a far worse;' would you not condemn that over-refining generosity, which, distrustful of the kind protection of Providence, neglected to inform your mistress of your sentiments, leaving her persuaded that you were indifferent, to unite herself with a man whom, if you had been ingenuous, she would have refused? I leave you to reflect on this circumstance; and remember, that you may be explicit without forming a positive *contract*."

Selborne perceived in an instant, that what he had supposed to be a most exalted proof of heroism, belonged in reality to
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that species of fictitious sentimental refinement which sports with genuine tenderness, under the disguise of more elevated ideas and more exalted virtue!

“Sophia,” thought he, “must have interpreted my assiduous attentions, and I will not permit her to think me a coxcomb, who can meanly trifle with her sensibility. I will disclose to her my whole heart; and, should heaven restore me in safety to my native country, I will not subject myself to the reproachful reflection, that I have lost to me the dearest object it contains through fastidious delicacy.”

Lord Selborne's route being fixed to commence next morning, a prompt declaration became necessary. Owing, I suppose, to excessive surprise, Sophia quite forgot to assume that air of resentment which she had determined to put on, as a punishment for former negligence. Persuaded that her lover's ad-
dresses

dresses were sanctioned by the approbation of both her grandfathers, and delighted that his disinterestedness was apparent, by his passion being avowed before her exalted expectations were generally known, she listened with modest pleasure to his protestations of eternal love, and referred him to Lord Glanville. This reference brought on an eclaireissement, that diminished their mutual delight. Selborne heard with emotion, that his mistress was not only the heiress of an earldom, but absolutely in the disposal of a person whose dark counsels no one could fathom; and Sophia felt the happiness of being secure of the reciprocal affections of the man she loved, embittered by anticipating the dangers to which he was going to be exposed, and the certainty of an immediate separation.

While her mind, depressed by sorrow, could scarcely obey the impulse of female delicacy

delicacy so far as to conceal its perturbation, her generous lover proceeded to vindicate the purity of his own attachment. “Sometimes,” said he, “I presumed to hope that Sophy Herbert favoured me by a preference, which I cherished as the dearest blessing I could enjoy. Yet if, when in the estimation of the world my addresses might be supposed to confer distinction upon you, I then doubted the propriety of disclosing my passion till you were more fully acquainted with my temper and character; what must be my present diffidence? or how can I act, knowing your high expectations, so as to prove myself not wholly unworthy of you? Admiration must every where attend you. Your exalted rank, your birth, fortune, and personal and mental attractions, must raise a host of competitors; and what can the absent Selborne oppose to their pretensions? I have nothing to urge
but

but my sincere and ardent attachment ; and I will not expect you to acknowledge that to be a valid claim to your favour. I will be bound to you, Miss Glanville, but you shall be free as air. If when I return to England I should find you the wife of a more deserving man, I will submit ; and, believe me, if he is as sensible of your worth as I am, and you are happy, I will *endeavour* not to be wretched."

This speech had certainly a little cast of the romantic. Sophia pardoned its extravagance. Even virtue and good sense, when in love, are apt to walk upon tiptoes. I am ready to acknowledge, that there is something very noble and elevated in the ideas naturally inspired by a sincere and worthy attachment ; and I only wish lovers not to use too high stilts for fear of accidents. Miss Glanville was herself employed in ruminating on the agreeable surprise which

Selborne

Selborne would feel when he discovered Lord Glanville's determination in his favour; and while she resolved to suspend the full avowal of her own sentiments till the earl's sanction should permit her to be quite explicit, she determined, when they met after dinner, to soften the pain of separation, by intreating Selborne to be careful of his life in the hour of peril. She even doubted whether she might not add, "for my sake."

These agreeable reveries vanished, when, on rejoining the company after dinner, she perceived that Selborne was not in the circle; that Mr. Brudenell's countenance expressed anxiety and displeasure, while the earl's strained civility, half-suppressed anger and gloomy absence, denoted that his wayward mind was in a state of more than ordinary agitation. No reason was given for Selborne's absence, till one of the com-

pany expressed his regret at his being sent on such a dangerous expedition. The storm that Lord Glanville had been collecting now seemed to burst forth ; and he protested that those mercenary caterpillars wanted sweeping from a land where they had too long fattened in idleness, wasting the vital stores of industry, and depriving a nation of its wealth. To this (in his usual style of equivocation) he added, “ As to Selborne in particular, he seems not *wholly* destitute of estimable qualities ; but I have such a natural detestation to all legalized butchers, that I am convinced no man can adopt that profession without having a corrupted heart.” Mr. Brudenell looked at Sophia during this declaration, observed that the heat of the room overcame her, offered his arm for a support, and they immediately withdrew.

A pause

A pause of some moments ensued. Sophia fixed her expressive eyes on Mr. Brudenell's face. "Be composed, my love," said the venerable pastor; "*you* have nothing to condemn in your own behaviour. I depend upon your fortitude for support, for my own seems to desert me."

"Has Selborne seen Lord Glanville?"

"He has; and Lord Glanville is——"

"What?"——

"A deceiver!" exclaimed Mr. Brudenell, walking across the room with unusual agitation. "How finite are the views of erring man! How often are we called upon to lament the accomplishment of those desires which it has been the labour of our lives to promote! I thought it my duty to assert your claim to your birthright. I restored you to your father's family, as an ornament

and a blessing. I beheld with transport the influence which your gentleness and tenderness acquired over Lord Glanville. With a delight that only parents can feel, I saw you engage the affections of a worthy man, whose birth and fortune were correspondent to your own. I encouraged his addresses, I recommended him to your favour, in the singleness and integrity of my heart. I thus busied myself to make you happy. O, my dearest girl! must I now suppose that all my cares have only tended to render you the prey of regret and secret anguish? I perceive Lord Glanville determines that you should raise the dignity of his house; and the generous Selborne is rejected with capricious cruelty, in hopes of an alliance more favourable to the earl's absurd ambition."

"O Sir!" said Sophia, with a look of heavenly complacence, "your fortitude has indeed deserted you, or you

would now recollect your own precepts, and forbear to complain that cross incidents have frustrated your wisest designs. I have heard you say, that it is folly as well as ingratitude to murmur at the inevitable destiny of our nature; and you have bid me never blame myself when my efforts failed of success, provided my intentions were pure, and the means that I made use of allowable. I know that your first temporal wish was, to promote my happiness; and Lord Glanville *shall not* make me wretched. I see the dilemma in which he means to involve me through the promise into which I was betrayed. He may separate me from Lord Selborne; but he shall never make me the mercenary, perjured, hypocritical tool of his ambition or his avarice. My heart will retain that preference which he once seemed to encourage; and I will endeavour so to act, that I may escape the pangs of self-

self-reproach. Do not, dear sir, accuse yourself as the author of my perplexities. These are my allotted trials, kindly sent to correct my vanity and humble my presumption. O, rather let your pious counsels instruct me how to improve my afflictions, so as to derive from them self-knowledge and equanimity."

"You have anticipated all that I could say," returned Mr. Brudenell with a profound sigh. "To those who can thus *sanctify* correction, adversity is the greatest blessing of indulgent Providence. Your composure has relieved my mind; and I will now inform you, that a violent altercation has taken place between Selborne and your grandfather. Elated by the engaging frankness of your manner, and incapable of soliciting the heiress of the Glanville family without the concurrence of the head of that house, your lover informed the earl of his attachment to you, and intreated his

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approbation. I advised him to this step. I love a manly, open conduct; and, though I had my doubts respecting Lord Glanville's intentions, what I had heard of his attachment to Selborne almost subdued them. I thought too, that an avowed engagement would relieve you from those solicitations, to which you would otherwise be exposed during your lover's absence, especially when your vast expectations are publicly owned. At Selborne's desire I was present at the interview. It afforded a marked and striking contrast, between openness and integrity on one hand, and the most polished duplicity on the other. I saw at once how it would end. The earl's low bows, strained smiles, and exaggerated declarations of esteem, convinced me that all his friendship would evaporate in verbal compliment. Selborne soon grew warm, and pleaded the encouragement which the earl had given

to his visits. In a moment your grandfather's smooth features grew contracted into the most stern frown. He talked of his own hospitality having been ungratefully abused, and of his suspicious temper becoming the dupe of deceit. Selborne's indignation at this *perversion* of language increased the keenness of the earl's invective. In vain did I attempt to soften them; they parted in severe displeasure."

"And did Selborne leave the house in this state of mind?" inquired Sophia.

"I followed him when he left the room," continued Mr. Brudenell, "to assure him of my esteem." "Lord Glanville's taunts," said he, "have struck me to the soul. It does not become me to boast of merit; but perhaps even he shall one day be compelled to own that I am not unworthy of *his* alliance. Sophia is above all praise, and beyond all desert. I rejoice that I have

not fettered her generous nature by any positive engagement. She is free, Mr. Brudenell; do you bear witness that I acknowledge her entire liberty. I presume not on her favour, I will scarcely allow myself to hope that I have an interest in her heart, but I go determined to deserve her."

"And did you promise nothing for me?" said Miss Glanville.

"I told him," resumed Mr. Brudenell, "that though you had no romantic enthusiasm in your disposition, you were as remarkable for the *constancy* of your attachments as for the cautious judgment with which you formed them."

"Did you say no more?" returned the young lady, while her cheek 'glowed celestial rosy red, love's proper hue:' "Surely, sir, to a man so diffident, so disinterested, placed in circumstances so very trying, you might have said rather more."

“ I am cautious,” returned Mr. Brudenell, “ not to increase the difficulties of your situation. You know not the threats which Lord Glanville may employ to intimidate you into compliance with his plans. Proposals may be made to you absolutely unexceptionable ; and time and absence may weaken Selborne’s influence in your heart. I see that you are piqued at this suggestion ; but I have known the world long ; and it is not from the quietude of my own passions, but from general considerations on the human character, that I judge, when I say that I have seen minds as delicate and as generous as your own, gradually weaned from a first attachment. I have also known people of most inviolable integrity unite themselves, in consequence of an early engagement, to a person for whom their heart had ceased to feel any preference, and thus become unhappy for the remainder of their lives.

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Though the maxims which experience has imprinted upon my mind are absolutely opposite to the dictates of romantic love, I am so fully sensible of the weakness of my fellow-creatures, that I am averse to every promise, contract, or supererogatory obligation, which tends to increase our difficulties, and to straiten the straight path of *positive* duty. I revere Lord Selborne's liberality in leaving you absolutely free. I commend his nice sense of duty in forbearing to press another interview, or even from sending you a farewell epistle after his altercation with the parent on whom you depend. The man who can thus generously scorn to betray unsuspecting tenderness into a clandestine engagement, is far more deserving of confidence and esteem than the selfish solicitor who makes his mistress *really* that object of pity which he artfully affects to be. Your lover, my child, has an
exalted

exalted idea of you ; and I am convinced that your consummate prudence will shew him you deserve it."

N. B. I request that all my matronly friends will watch their daughters during the perusal of the last paragraph ; as I am afraid some maternal interposition will be necessary to preserve my heretical opinions on the divinity and immutability of love from the flames.

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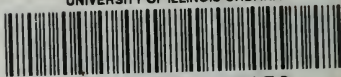
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